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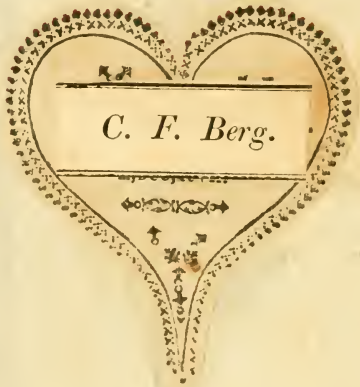

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PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

My Lord,

THAT your Lordſhip may be prepar'd to receive, what I here preſume to lay before you, with the greater Candour, I ſincerely profeſs, that it does not proceed from any Prejudice; but from certain Reaſons, upon which I find my ſelf invincibly oblig'd to differ from your Lordſhip in Opinion.

To prevent all Suſpicion of my deſigning any thing injurious to your Lordſhip's Character, in this Addreſs, I have prefix'd what otherwiſe, I ſhould have choſen to conceal, my Name to it.

Your Lordſhip is repreſented as at the Head of a Cauſe, where every Adverſary is ſure to be reproach'd, either as a Furious Jacobite, or Popiſh Bigot, as an Enemy to the Liberty of his Country, and the Proteſtant Cauſe. Theſe hard Names are to be expected, my Lord, from a Set of Men, who diſhonour your Lordſhip with their Panegyricks upon your Performances; whoſe Praiſes defile the Character they would adorn.

When Dr. *Snape* repreſents your Lordſhip as no Friend to the good Orders, and neceſſary Inſtitutions of the Church; you complain of

the ill Arts of an Adversary, who sets you out in false Colours, perverts your Words, on purpose to encrease his own *Imaginary Triumphs*. But, my Lord, in this, Dr. *Snape* only thinks with those who would be counted your Best Friends; and would no longer be your Friends, but that they conclude, you have declar'd against the Authority of the Church. Does your Lordship suppose, that the *T----ds*, the *H-----ks*, the *B-----ts*, would be at so much Expence of Time and Labour, to justifie, commend and enlarge upon your Lordship's Notions, if they did not think you engag'd in their Cause? There is not a Libertine, or Loose Thinker in *England*, but he imagines you intend to dissolve the Church as a *Society*, and are ready to offer Incence to your Lordship for so meritorious a Design. It is not my Intention to reproach your Lordship with their Esteem, or to involve you in the Guilt of their Schemes; but to shew, that an Adversary does not need any Malice to make him believe you no Friend to the Constitution of the Church, as a Regular Society, since your Greatest Admirers every Day publish it by necessary Construction to the World in Print.

After a Word or two concerning a Passage in your Lordship's *Preservative*, I shall proceed to consider your Answer to Dr. *Snape*. In the 98*th* Page you have these Words:

But

But when you are secure of your Integrity before God,--- this will lead you (as it ought all of us) not to be afraid of the Terrors of Men, or the vain Words of Regular, and Uninterrupted Successions, Authoritative Benedictions, Excommunications,---Nullity, or Validity of God's Ordinances to the People upon Account of Niceties and Trifles, or any other the like Dreams.

My Lord, thus much must be imply'd here: Be not afraid of the Terrors of Men, who would persuade you of the Danger of being in this, or that Communion, and fright you into particular Ways of worshipping God, who would make you believe such Sacraments, and such Clergy, are necessary to recommend you to his Favour. But these, your Lordship affirms, we may contemn, if we are but secure of our Integrity.

So that, if a Man be not a *Hypocrite*, it matters not what Religion he is of. This is a Proposition of an Unfriendly Aspect to Christianity: But that it is entirely your Lordship's, is plain from what you declare P. 90. *That every one may find it in his own Conduct to be true, that his Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon his actual being, or continuing in any particular Method; but upon his real Sincerity in the Conduct of his Conscience.* Again, P. 91. *The Favour of God follows Sincerity considered as such, and consequently, equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity.* So that, I hope, I

 have

have not wreſted your Lordſhip's Meaning, by ſaying, that according to theſe Notions, if a Man be not an Hypocrite, it matters not what Religion he is of. Not only ſincere *Quakers*, *Ranters*, *Muggletonians*, and *Fifth Monarchy Men*, are as much in the Favour of God as any of the Apoſtles; but likewiſe ſincere *Jews*, *Turks* and *Deiſts*, are upon as good a Bottom, and as ſecure of the Favour of God, as the ſincereſt Chriſtian.

For your Lordſhip ſaith, it is Sincerity, as ſuch, that procures the Favour of God. If it be Sincerity, as ſuch, then it is Sincerity independent and excluſive of any particular Way of Worſhip: And if the *Favour of God equally follows* every equal *Degree* of *Sincerity*, then it is impoſſible there ſhould be any Difference, either as to Merit or Happineſs, between a ſincere *Martyr*, and a ſincere *Perſecutor*; and he that burns the Chriſtian, if he be but in earneſt, has the ſame Title to a Reward for it, as he that is burnt for believing in Chriſt.

Your Lordſhip ſaith, you can't help it, if People will charge you with * *Evil Intentions* and *Bad Views*. I intend no ſuch Charge: But I wonder, your Lordſhip ſhould think it hard, that any one ſhould infer from theſe Places, that you *are againſt the Intereſt of the Church of* England. For

* *Anſwer, p.* 46.

For, my Lord, cannot the *Quakers*, *Muggletonians*, *Deists*, *Presbyterians*, assert you as much in their Interest as we can? Have you said any thing for us, or done any thing for us in this *Preservative*, but what you have equally done for them? Your Lordship is ours, as you fill a Bishoprick; but we are at a loss to discover from this Discourse, what other Interest we have in your Lordship: For you openly expose our Communion, and give up all the Advantages of it, by telling all sorts of People, if they are but sincere in their own Way, they are as much in God's Favour, as any Body else. Is this supporting our Interest, my Lord?

Suppose a Friend of King *George*, should declare it to all *Britains* whatever, that tho' they were divided into five thousand different Parties, to set up different *Pretenders*; yet if they were but sincere in their Designs, they would be as much in the Favour of God, as those who are most firmly attach'd to his Majesty. Does your Lordship think such a one would be thought any mighty Friend to the Government? And, my Lord, is not this the Declaration you made as to the Church of *England*? Have you not told all Parties, that their Sincerity is enough? Have you said so much as one Word in Recommendation of our Communion? Or, if it was not for your Church-Character in the Title-Pages of this

Discourse,

Diſcourſe, could any one alive conceive what Communion you was of? Nay, a Reader that was a Stranger, would imagine, that he who will allow no Difference between Communions, is himſelf of no Communion. Your Lordſhip, for ought I know, may act according to the ſtricteſt Sincerity, and may think it your Duty to undermine the Foundations of the Church. I am only ſurprized, that you ſhould refuſe to own the Reaſonableneſs of ſuch a Charge. Your Lordſhip hath cancell'd all our Obligations to any particular Communion, upon pretence of *Sincerity*.

I hope, my Lord, there is Mercy in ſtore for all ſorts of People, however erroneous in their Way of Worſhipping God; but cannot believe, that to be a ſincere Chriſtian, is to be no more in the Favour of God, than to be a ſincere *Deiſt*, or ſincere *Deſtroyer* of Chriſtians. It will be allow'd, that Sincerity is a neceſſary Principle of true Religion; and that without it, all the moſt ſpecious Appearances of Vertue are nothing worth: But ſtill, neither common Senſe, nor plain Scripture, will ſuffer me to think, that when our Saviour was on Earth, they were as much in the Favour of God, who ſincerely refuſed to be his Diſciples, and ſincerely call'd for his Crucifixion, as thoſe who ſincerely left all and follow'd him. If they were, my Lord, where is that Bleſſedneſs of Believing ſo often mentioned in the Scripture?

Scripture? Or where is the Happineſs of the Goſpel Revelation, if they are as well who refuſe it ſincerely, as thoſe who embrace it with Integrity?

Our Saviour declar'd, that thoſe who believ'd, ſhould be ſaved; but thoſe who believ'd not, ſhould be damned. Will your Lordſhip ſay, that all Unbelievers were inſincere; or that tho' they were damned, they were yet in the ſame Favour of God, as thoſe that were ſaved?

The Apoſtle aſſures us, that *there is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they can be ſaved*, but Jeſus Chriſt. But your Lordſhip hath found out an Atonement, more univerſal than that of his Blood; and which will even make thoſe bleſſed and happy, who count it an *unholy Thing*. For ſeeing it is *Sincerity, as ſuch*, that alone recommends us to the Favour of God, they who ſincerely perſecute this Name, are in as good a Way, as thoſe that ſincerely worſhip it. Has God declar'd this to be the only Way to Salvation? How can your Lordſhip tell the World, that Sincerity will ſave them, be they in what Way they will? Is this all the Neceſſity of Chriſt's Satisfaction? Is this all the Advantage of the Goſpel Covenant, that thoſe who ſincerely contemn it, are in as good a State without it, as thoſe that embrace it?

My

My Lord, here is no Aggravation of your Meaning. If Sincerity, as such, be the only thing that recommends us to God, and every equal Degree of it procures an equal Degree of Favour; it is a Demonstration, that Sincerity *against* Christ is as pleasing to God, as Sincerity *for* him. My Lord, this is a Doctrine which no Words can enough decry. So I shall leave it, to consider, what Opinion St. *Paul* had of this kind of Sincerity. He did not think, when he persecuted the Church, tho' he did it *ignorantly*, and in Unbelief, and out of Zeal towards God, that he was as much in the Favour of God, as when he suffer'd for Christ. *I am the least*, saith he, *of the Apostles, not fit to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of Christ.* The Apostle does not scruple to charge himself with Guilt, notwithstanding his Sincerity.

A little Knowledge of Human Nature will teach us, that our Sincerity may be often charged with Guilt; not as if we were guilty, because we are sincere; but because it may be our Fault that we are hearty and sincere in such or such ill-grounded Opinions. It may have been from some ill Conduct of our own, some Irregularities, or Abuse of our Faculties, that we conceive things as we do, and are fix'd in such or such Tenets. And can we think so much owing to a *Sincerity* in Opinions, contracted by ill Habits and guilty Behaviour? There are seve-

several faulty Ways, by which People may cloud and prejudice their Understandings, and throw themselves into a very odd Way of thinking; or for some cause or other, *God may send them a strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie.* And will your Lordship say, that those who are thus sunk into Errors, it may be, thro' their own ill Conduct, or as a Judgement of God upon them, are as much in his Favour as those who love and adhere to the Truth. This, my Lord, is a shocking Opinion, and has given Numbers of Christians great Offence, as contradicting common Sense, and plain Scripture; as setting all Religion upon the Level as to the Favour of God.

The next thing, that according to your Lordship, *we ought not to be concerned at, is vain Words of Regular, and Uninterrupted Successions, as Niceties, Trifles and Dreams.* Thus much surely, is imply'd in these Words; that no kind of *Ordination*, or *Mission* of the Clergy, is of any Consequence or Moment to us. For if the Ordination need not be Regular, or deriv'd from those who had Authority from Christ to Ordain, it is plain, that no particular kind of Ordination can be of any more Value than another. For no Ordination whatever, can have any worse Defects, than as being Irregular, and not derived by a Succession from Christ. So that if these Circumstances are to

be look'd on as *Trifles* and *Dreams*: All the Difference that can be ſuppoſed betwixt any Ordinations, comes under the ſame Notion of Trifles and Dreams; and conſequently are either good alike, or trifling alike. So that *Quakers*, *Independents*, *Presbyterians*, according to your Lordſhip, have as much Reaſon to think their Teachers as uſeful to them, and as true Miniſters of Chriſt, as thoſe of the Epiſcopal Communion have to think their Teachers. For if Regularity of Ordination, and Uninterrupted Succeſſion, be mere Trifles, and nothing; then all the Difference betwixt us and other Teachers, muſt be nothing: For they can differ from us in no other reſpects. So that, my Lord, if Epiſcopal Ordination, derived from Chriſt, hath been contended for by the Church of *England*, your Lordſhip hath in this Point deſerted her: And you not only give up Epiſcopal Ordination, by ridiculing a Succeſſion; but likewiſe by the ſame Argument exclude any *Miniſters* on Earth from having Chriſt's Authority. For if there be not a Succeſſion of Perſons authorized from Chriſt to ſend others to act in his Name, then both Epiſcopal and Presbyterian Teachers are equally *Uſurpers*, and as mere *Lay-men* as any at all. For there can't be any other Difference between the Clergy and Layity, but as the one hath Authority deriv'd from Chriſt, to perform Offices, which the other hath not. But this

Autho-

Authority can be no otherwise had, than by an Uninterrupted Succession of Men from Christ, empower'd to qualifie others. For if the Succession be once broke, People must either go into the Ministry of their own Accord, or be sent by such as have no more Power to send others, than to go themselves. And, my Lord, can these be called Ministers of Christ, or receiv'd as his Ambassadors? Can they be thought to act in his Name, who have no Authority from him? If so, your Lordship's Servant might Ordain and Baptize to as much purpose as your Lordship: For it could only be objected to such Actions, that they had no Authority from Christ. And if there be no Succession of Ordainers from him, every one is equally qualified to Ordain. My Lord, I should think, it might be granted me, that the Administring of a Sacrament is an Action we have no right to perform, consider'd either as Men, Gentlemen, or Scholars, or Members of a Civil Society: Who then can have any Authority to interpose, but he that has it from Christ? And how that can be had from him, without a Succession of Men from him, is not easily conceiv'd. Should a private Person choose a Lord Chancellour, and declare his Authority good; would there be any thing but Absurdity, Impudence and Presumption in it? But why he can't as well commission a Person to act, sign, and seal in the King's

Name, as in the Name of Christ, is unaccountable.

My Lord, it is a plain and obvious Truth, that no Man, or Number of Men, consider'd as such, can any more make a Priest, or commission a Person to officiate in Christ's Name, *as such*, than he can enlarge the Means of Grace, or add a new Sacrament for the Conveyance of Spiritual Advantages. The Ministers of Christ are as much *positive Ordinances*, as the Sacraments; and we might as well think, that Sacraments not instituted by him, might be Means of Grace, as those pass for his Ministers, who have no Authority from him.

Once more, all things are either in common in the Church of Christ, or they are not: If they are, then every one may Preach, Baptize, Ordain, *&c.* If all things are not thus common; but the Administring of the Sacrament, and Ordination, *&c.* are Offices appropriated to particular Persons; then I desire to know, how in this present Age, or any other since the Apostles, Christians can know their respective Duties, or what they may, or may not do, with respect to the several Acts of Church Communion, if there be no *Uninterrupted Succession* of Authoriz'd Persons from Christ: For till Authority from Christ appears, to make a Difference between them, we are all alike, and any one may officiate as well as ano-

another. To make a Jeſt of therefore the *Uninterrupted Succeſſion*, is to make a Jeſt of Ordination; to deſtroy the Sacred Character, and make all Pretenders to it, as good as thoſe that are ſent by Chriſt.

If there be no *Uninterrupted Succeſſion*, then there are no Authoriz'd Miniſters from Chriſt; if no ſuch Miniſters, then no Chriſtian Sacraments; if no Chriſtian Sacraments, then no Chriſtian Covenant, whereof the Sacraments are the Stated and Viſible Seals.

My Lord, this is all your own: Here are no Conſequences palm'd upon you; but the firſt, plain, and obvious Senſe of your Lordſhip's Words.------ And yet, after all, your Lordſhip asks Dr. *Snape*, Why all thoſe *Outcries* againſt you*? Indeed, my Lord, you have only taken the main Supports of our Religion away; you have neither left us Prieſts, nor Sacraments, nor Church: Or, what is the ſame thing, you have made them all *Trifles* and *Dreams*. And what has your Lordſhip given us in the room of all theſe Advantages? Why, only *Sincerity*; this is the great univerſal Atonement for all: This is that, which, according to your Lordſhip, will help us to the Communion of Saints hereafter, tho' we are in Communion with any body, or no body, here.

* *Anſw. p.* 40.

The

The next thing we are not to be afraid of, are, *the Vain Words of Nullity and Validity of God's Ordinances, i. e.* whether they are administred by a Clergyman or a Lay-man. This indeed I have shewn, was included in what you said about the Trifle of *Uninterrupted Succession.* But, for fear we should have overlook'd it there, you have given it us in expres Words in the next Line.

Your Lordship tells Dr. *Snape*, that *you know no Confusion*, Glorious, or Inglorious, *that you have endeavuored to introduce* into the Church †.

My Lord, if I may presume to repeat your own Words, Lay your Hand on your Heart, and ask your self, whether the incouraging all manner of Divisions, be not endeavouring to introduce Confusion? If there were in *England* Five Thousand different Sects, has not your Lordship persuaded them to be content with themselves; not to value what they are told by other Communions; that if they are but sincere, they need not have regard to any thing else? Is not this to introduce Confusion? What is Confusion, but Difference and Division? And does not your Lordship plainly declare to the World, that there is no need of uniting? That there is no particular Way or Method that can recommend us more to the

† *Answ.* p. 47.

Favour

Favour of God, than another? Has your Lordſhip ſo much as given the leaſt Hint, that it's better to be in the Communion of the Church of *England*, than not? Have you not expoſed her Sacraments, and Clergy; and as much as lay in you, broke down every thing in her, that diſtinguiſhes her from Fanatical Conventicles? What is there in her as a Church, that you left untouch'd? What have you left in her, that can any way invite others into her Communion? Are her Clergy Authoriz'd more than others? For fear that ſhould be thought, you make a Regular Succeſſion from Chriſt a *Trifle*. Are her Sacraments more regularly adminiſtred? Leſt that ſhould recommend her, you ſlight the *Nullity, or Validity of God's Ordinances*. Is there any Authority in her Laws, which enjoyn Communion with her? Leſt this ſhould be believ'd, you tell us that our being or continuing in any particular Method (or particular Communion) cannot recommend us more to the Favour of God than another.

I muſt obſerve to your Lordſhip, that theſe Opinions are very odly put in a *Preſervative from ill Principles*; or *an Appeal to the Conſciences and Common Senſe of the Layity*. Are they to be perſuaded not to joyn with the Nonjurors, becauſe no particular Prieſts, no particular Sacraments, or particular Communion is any thing but a Dream and Trifle; and ſuch things

things as no way recommend us to the Favour of God more than others? Are the Nonjurors only thus to be answer'd? Is the Establish'd Church thus to be defended? Your Lordship indeed has not mine'd the matter: But, I hope, the Church of *England* is to be supported upon better Principles, or not at all.

If I should tell a Person that put a Case of Conscience to me, that all Cases of Conscience are Trifles, and signifie nothing; it would be plain, that I had given him a direct Answer: But if he had either Conscience, or common Sense, he would seek out a better Confessor.

Your Lordship tells Dr. *Snape*, that he saith and unsaith, to the *great Diversion of the Roman Catholicks* *. But if your Lordship would unsay some things you have said, it would be a greater Mortification to them, than all that ever you said, or writ in your Life. To deny the Necessity of any particular Communion, to expose the Validity of Sacraments, and rally upon the Uninterrupted Succession of Priests, and pull down every Pillar in the Church of Christ, is an Errand on which *Rome* hath sent many Messengers. And the Papists are no more provoked with your Lordship for these Discourses, than they were Angry at *William Penn* the Jesuite, for preaching up *Quakerism*. So

* *Answ. p.* 26.

long

long as they rejoyce in our Diviſions, or are glad to ſee the City of God made a mere *Babel*, they can no more be angry at your Lordſhip, than at your Advocates.

Dr. *Snape* ſays, you repeſent the Church of Chriſt as a Kingdom, in which Chriſt neither acts himſelf, nor hath inveſted any one elſe with Authority to act for him. At this your Lordſhip cries, *p.* 22. *Lay your Hand upon your Heart, and ask, Is this a Chriſtian, Human, Honeſt Repreſentation of what your own Eyes read in my Sermon.*

My Lord, I have dealt as ſincerely with my Heart as it is poſſible; and I muſt confeſs, I take the Doctor's Repreſentation to be Chriſtian and Honeſt. For tho' you ſometimes contend againſt Abſolute and Indiſpenſable Authority; yet it is plain, that you ſtrike at all Authority; and aſſert, as the Doctor ſaith, that Chriſt hath not inveſted any one on Earth with an Authority to act for him.

Page 11. You expreſsly ſay, *That as to the Affairs of Conſcience and Eternal Salvation, Chriſt hath left no Viſible, Human Authority behind him.*

Now, my Lord, is not this ſaying, that he has left no Authority at all? For Chriſt came with no other Authority Himſelf: But as to Conſcience and Salvation, he erected a Kingdom, which related to nothing but Conſcience and Salvation; and therefore they who have no Authority as to Conſcience and Salva-

tion, have no Authority at all in his Kingdom. Conſcience and Salvation are the only Affairs of that Kingdom.

Your Lordſhip denies, that any one has Authority in theſe Affairs; and yet you take it ill to be charged with aſſerting, that Chriſt hath not inveſted any one with Authority for him. How can any one act for him, but in his Kingdom? How can they Act in his Kingdom, if they have nothing to do with Conſcience and Salvation, when his Kingdom is concern'd with nothing elſe?

Again, *p.* 16. your Lordſhip ſaith, that no one of them (Chriſtians) *any more than another, hath Authority either to make new Laws for Chriſt's Subjects, or to impoſe a Senſe upon the old ones; or to Judge, Cenſure or Puniſh the Servants of another Maſter, in Matters purely relating to Conſcience.*

I can meet with no Divine, my Lord, either Juror or Non-juror, High or Low, Church man, or Diſſenter, that does not think your Lordſhip has plainly aſſerted in theſe Paſſages, what the Doctor has laid to your Charge, *that no one is inveſted with Authority from Chriſt to act for him.*

Your Lordſhip thinks, this is ſufficiently anſwered, by ſaying you contend againſt an Abſolute Authority. You do indeed ſometimes joyn Abſolute with that Authority you diſclaim. But, my Lord, it is ſtill true, that you have taken all Authority from the Church: For the Reaſons you every where give againſt this

this Authority, conclude as ſtrongly againſt any Degrees of Authority, as that which is truly Abſolute.

1*ſt*, You diſown the Authority of any Chriſtians over other Chriſtians; becauſe they are the *Servants of another Maſter* (p. 16.). Now this concludes as ſtrongly againſt *any* Authority, as that which is *Abſolute:* For no one can have the leaſt Authority over thoſe that are entirely under another's Juriſdiction. A ſmall Authority over another's Servant, is as inconſiſtent as the greateſt.

2*dly*, You reject this Authority, becauſe of the Objects it is exerciſed upon, *i. e.* Matters purely relating to Conſcience and Salvation. Here this Authority is rejected, becauſe it relates to *Conſcience* and *Salvation*; which does as well exclude every Degree of Authority, as that which is Abſolute. For if Authority and Conſcience cannot ſuit together, Conſcience rejects Authority, *as ſuch*; and not becauſe there is this or that Degree of it. So that this Argument baniſhes all Authority.

3*dly*, Your Lordſhip denies any Church-Authority; becauſe Chriſt doth not *interpoſe to convey Infallibility, or aſſert the true Interpretation of his own Laws* †. Now this Reaſon concludes as full againſt *all Authority*, as that which is *Abſolute*. For if Infallibility is neceſſary to found an Obedience upon in

† *Sermon, p.* 15.

Christ's Kingdom, it's plain, that no body in Christ's Kingdom hath any Right to any Obedience from others, nor consequently, any Authority to command it, no Members, or Number of Members of it, being infallible.

4*thly*, Another Reason your Lordship gives against Church-Authority, is this; *That it is the taking Christ's Kingdom out of his Hands, and placing it in their own*, (p. 14.) Now this Reason proves as much against Authority in general, or *any Degrees* of it, as that which is *Absolute*. For if the Authority of others is inconsistent with Christ's being King of his own Kingdom, then *every Degree* of Authority, so far as it extends, is an Invasion of so much of Christ's Authority, and usurping upon his Right.

The Reason likewise which your Lordship gives to prove the Apostles not Usurpers of Christ's Authority, plainly condemns every Degree of Authority which any Church can now pretend to. *They were no Usurpers; because he then interposed to convey Infallibility; and was in all that they ordained: So that the Authority was his in the strictest Sense**. So that where he does not interpose to convey Infallibility, there every *Degree* of Authority is a *Degree* of Usurpation; and consequently, the present Church having no Infallibility, has no Right to exercise the *least Degree* of Autho-

* *Answer, p.* 38.

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rity, without robbing Christ of his Prerogative.

Thus it plainly appears, that every Reason you have offer'd against Church-Authority, concludes with as much Strength against *all* Authority, as that which is *Absolute*. And therefore Dr. *Snape* has done you no Injury in charging you with the Denial of *All* Authority.

There happens, my Lord, to be *only* this Difference between your Sermon and the Defence of it, that that is so many Pages against Church Authority, *as such*; and this a Confutation of the *Pope's Infallibility*. It is very strange, that so *Clear a Writer*, who has been so long enquiring into the Nature of *Government*, should not be able to make himself be understood upon it: That your Lordship should be only preaching against the Pope; and yet *All the Lower House of Convocation* should unanimously conceive, that your Doctrine therein deliver'd, tended to *subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church of Christ*.

And, my Lord, it will appear from what follows, that your Lordship is even of the same Opinion your self; and that you imagin'd you had banish'd *all* Authority, *as such*, out of the Church, by those Arguments you had offer'd against an *Absolute* Authority. This is plain from the following Passage, where you ridicule *that* which Dr. *Snape* took to be *an Authority*, tho' not Absolute. When Dr. *Snape* said, that no Church-Authority was to be obey'd

obey'd in any thing contrary to the Reveal'd Will of God ; your Lordſhip triumphs thus: *Glorious Abſolute Authority indeed, in your own Account, to which Chriſt's Subjects owe no Obedience, till they have examin'd into his own Declarations ; and then they obey not this Authority, but him* *.

Here you make nothing of that Authority which is not Abſolute ; and yet you think it hard to be told, that you have taken away *all* Church-Authority. That which is Abſolute, you expreſsly deny: And here you ſay, that which is not Abſolute, is nothing at all. Where then is the Authority you have left ? Or how is it, that Chriſt has impower'd any one to act in his Name?

Your Lordſhip fights ſafe under the Protection of the Word *Abſolute* ; but your Aim is at all Church-Power. And your Lordſhip makes too haſty an Inference, that becauſe it is not Abſolute, it is none at all. If you ask, where you have made this Inference ; it is on occaſion of the above mention'd Triumph ; where your Lordſhip makes it an inſignificant *Authority*, which is only to be obey'd ſo long as it is not contrary to Scripture.

Your Lordſhip ſeems to think, all is loſt as to Church Power ; becauſe the Dr. does not claim an *Abſolute one* ; but allows it to be ſub-

* *Anſwer, p.* 27.

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ject to Scripture ; as if *all* Authority was Absolute, or else nothing at all. I shall therefore consider the Nature of this Church-Power ; and shew, that tho' it is not *Absolute*, yet it is a *Real Authority*, and is not such a mere Nothing as your Lordship makes it.

An Absolute Authority, according to your Lordship, is, what is to be always obey'd by every Individual that is subject to it, in all Circumstances. This is an Authority that we utterly deny to the Church. But, I presume, there may be an Authority inferiour to this, which is nevertheless a *Real* Authority, and is to be esteem'd as such ; and that for these Reasons :

First, I hope, it will be allow'd me, that our Saviour came into the World with Authority. But it was not lawful for the *Jews* to receive him, if they thought his Appearance not agreeable to those Marks and Characters they had of him in their Scriptures. May I not here say, my Lord, *Glorious Authority of Christ indeed, to which the Jews ow'd no Obedience, till they had examin'd their Scriptures ; and then they obey, not Him, but Them !*

Again, The Apostles were sent into the World with Authority : But yet, those who thought their Doctrines unworthy of God, and unsuitable to the Principles of Natural Religion, were oblig'd not to obey them. *Glorious Authority indeed, of the Apostles, to whom Mankind*

kind ow'd no Obedience, till they had, First, exa-min'd their own Notions of God and Religion; and then they obeyed, not the Apoſtles, but Them!

I hope, my Lord, it may be allow'd, that the Sacraments are real Means of Grace: But it is certain, they are only *conditionally* ſo, if thoſe that partake of them, are endow'd with ſuitable Diſpoſitions of Piety and Vertue. *Glorious Means of Grace of the Sacraments, which is only obtained by ſuch Pious Diſpoſitions; and then it is owing to the* Diſpoſitions, *and not the* Sacraments. Now, my Lord, if there can be ſuch a thing as inſtituted *real* Means of Grace, which are only *conditionally apply'd*, I can't ſee, why there may not be an inſtituted real Authority in the Church, which is only to be *conditionally* obey'd.

Your Lordſhip has written a great many Elaborate Pages to prove the *Engliſh* Government Limited; and that no Obedience is due to it, but whilſt it preſerves our Fundamentals; and, I ſuppoſe, the People are to judge for themſelves, whether theſe are ſafe, or not. *Glorious Authority of the* Engliſh *Government, which is to be obey'd no longer, than the People think it their Intereſt to obey it!*

Will your Lordſhip ſay, there is *no Authority* in the *Engliſh* Government, becauſe only a *Conditional Obedience* is due to it, whilſt we think it ſupports our Fundamentals? Why then

then must the *Church-Authority* be reckon'd nothing at all, because only a *Rational Conditional* Obedience is to be paid, whilst we think it not contrary to Scripture? Is a Limited, Conditional Government in the State, such a Wise, Excellent, and Glorious Constitution? And is the same Authority in Church, such Absurdity, Nonsense, and Nothing at all, as to any Actual Power?

If there be such a thing as Obedience upon Rational Motives, there must be such a thing as Authority that is not Absolute, or that does not require a *Blind, Implicit* Obedience. Indeed, Rational Creatures can obey no other Authority; they must have Reasons for what they do. And yet because the Church claims only this *Rational* Obedience, your Lordship explodes *such* Authority as none at all.

Yet it must be granted, that *no other* Obedience was due to the *Prophets*, or our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*: They were only to be obey'd by those who thought their Doctrines *worthy* of God. So that if the Church has *no* Authority, because we must first consult the Scriptures, before we obey it; neither our Saviour, nor his Apostles, had *any* Authority, because the *Jews* were first to consult their Scriptures, and the Heathen their Reason, before they obey'd them. And yet this is all that is said against Church-Authority; that because they are to judge of the *Lawfulness* of its In-

junctions, therefore they owe it *no* Obedience: Which falſe Concluſion, I hope, is enough expoſed.

If we think it unlawful to do any thing that the Church requires of us, we muſt not obey its Authority. So, if we think it unlawful to ſubmit to any Temporal Government, we are not to comply. But, I hope, it will not follow, that the Government has no Authority, becauſe ſome think it unlawful to comply with it. If we are ſo unhappy as to judge wrong in any matter of Duty, we muſt nevertheleſs act according to our Judgments; and the Guilt of Diſobedience either in *Church* or *State*, is more or leſs, according as our Errour is more or leſs voluntary, and occaſion'd by our own Miſmanagement.

I believe, I have ſhewn, Firſt, that all your Lordſhip's Arguments againſt Church-Authority conclude with the ſame Force againſt *all* Degrees of Authority. Secondly, That tho' Church-Authority be not Abſolute in a *certain Senſe*; yet if our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* had any Authority, the Church may have a *Real* Authority: For neither *He*, nor his *Apoſtles* had *ſuch* an Abſolute Authority, as excludes all *Conſideration* and *Examination:* Which is your Notion of *Abſolute* Authority.

Before I leave this Head, I muſt obſerve, that in this very Anſwer to Dr. *Snape*, where you would be thought to have expoſed *this*

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Absolute Authority *alone*; you exclude *all* Authority along with it. You ask the Dr. * *Is this the whole you can make of it, after all your boasted Zeal for* Mere Authority? You then say, *Why may not I be allow'd to say, no Man on Earth has an* Absolute Authority, *as well as you*? My Lord, there can be no understanding of this, unless *Mere Authority* and *Absolute Authority* be taken for the same thing by your Lordship.

But, my Lord, is not the smallest *Particle* of Matter, *Mere Matter*? And is it therefore the same as the *Whole Mass* of Matter? Is an Inch of Space, because it is *Mere Space*, the same as *Infinite* Space? How comes it then, that *Mere Authority* is the same as *Absolute* Authority? My Lord, *Mere* Authority implies *only* Authority, as a *Mere* Man implies *only* a Man: But your Lordship makes no difference between *this*, and Absolute Authority; and therefore hath left *no* Authority in the Church, unless there can be Authority, that is not *Mere Authority*, i. e. Matter, that is not *Mere Matter*; or Space, that is not *Mere* Space.

When the Church enjoyns Matters of Indifference, is she obey'd for any Reason, but for her *Mere* Authority? But your Lordship allows no Obedience to *Mere Authority*; and therefore no Obedience, even in Indifferent Matters.

* *Answer, p.* 26.

Thus do these Arguments of yours lay all waste in the Church: And I must not omit *one*, my Lord, which falls as heavy upon the *State*, and makes all *Civil Government* unlawful. Your Words are these: *As the Church of Christ is the Kingdom of Christ, He himself is King; and in this it is imply'd, that He is the* sole *Law-giver to his* Subjects, *and Himself the sole* Judge *of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation.* If there be any *Truth* or Force in this *Argument*, it concludes with the same *Truth* and *Force* against all Authority in the *Kingdoms* of this World. In Scripture we are told, *the Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men*, (Dan. 4. 17.) *that the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King*, (Isa. 33. 22.) Now, if because Christ is *King* of the Church, it must be in *this imply'd*, that He is *sole* Lawgiver to his *Subjects*; it is plain to a Demonstration, that because *God* is *King* and *Lawgiver* to the whole Earth, that therefore *He* is *sole Law-giver* to his *Subjects*; and consequently, that *all Civil Authority*, *all Human Laws*, are mere *Invasions* and *Usurpations* upon *God's Authority*, as *King* of the whole Earth.

Is no body to have any Jurisdiction in *Christ's Kingdom*, *because* He is *King* of it? How then comes any one to have *any Authority* in the *Kingdoms* of this World, when God has declar'd himself the *Law-giver*, and *King* of the whole World? Will your Lordship say, that Christ

Christ hath left us the *Scriptures*, as the *Statute Laws* of his *Kingdom*, to prevent the Necessity of *After Laws?* It may be answer'd, That God has given us *Reason* for our *Constant Guide*; which, if it were as duly attended to, would as *certainly* answer the Ends of *Civil Life*, as the Observance of the *Scriptures* would make us *Good Christians*.

But, my Lord, as Human Nature, if left to it self, would neither answer the *Ends* of a *Spiritual* or *Civil* Society; so a *constant Visible* Government in both, is *equally* necessary: And I believe, it appears to all unprejudic'd Eyes, that in this Argument *at least*, your Lordship has declar'd both *equally Unlawful*.

Your Lordship saith, † *The Exclusion of the Papists from the Throne, was not upon the Account of their Religion.* Three Lines after, you say, *I have contended indeed, elsewhere, that it was their unhappy Religion which* alone *made them uncapable in themselves, of Governing this Protestant Nation, by the Laws of the Land.* My Lord, I can't reconcile these two Passages. *Popery alone*, you say, was their *Incapacity*. From which it may be inferr'd, they had *no other Incapacity*. Yet your Lordship saith, they were not excluded upon the Account of their *Religion*. A little after, you say, *The Ground of their Exclusion was not their Religion*,

† *Answer, p.* 25.

consider'd

consider'd, as such; *but the Fatal, Natural, Certain Effect of it upon themselves to our Destruction.*

As for Instance; your Lordship may mean thus: If a *Man* of a *great Estate* dies, he loses his *Right* to his Estate; not upon the Account of *Death*, consider'd, *as such*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect* of it upon himself. Or, suppose a Person is excluded for being an *Idiot*; it is not for his Idiocy, consider'd *as such*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect of it* upon himself to our Destruction.

My Lord, this is prodigious deep: I wish it be clear; or that it be not too refin'd a Notion for common Use on this Subject. Likewise I do not conceive, my Lord, what you can call the *Fatal, Natural, Certain Effects* of any one's Religion. I am sure, amongst *Protestants*, there are *Natural, Certain Effects* of their Religion upon them; that their Practices don't *Fatally* follow their Principles: Neither is there any demonstrative Certainty that a *Bishop* can't be against *Episcopacy*.

If the Papists are so *unalterably sincere* in their *Religion*, that we can prove their *certain* Observation of it, it's pity but they had our *Principles*, and we had their *Practice*. I have not that good Opinion of the *Papists*, which your Lordship hath: I believe, several of them sit as loose to their Religion *as other Folks*.

Does

Does your Lordſhip think, that all *Papiſts* are alike? That Natural *Temper*, *Ambition*, and *Education*, don't make as much Difference amongſt them, as the *ſame things* do amongſt us? Are all *Proteſtants* looſe and libertine alike? why ſhould all *Papiſts* be the ſame *Zealots?* If not, my Lord, then theſe *Effects* you call *Fatal, Natural, and Certain*, may be not to be depended upon.

Your Lordſhip knows, that it was generally believ'd, that K. *Charles the Second* was a Papiſt: But I never heard of any *Fatal, Natural, and Certain Effects of his Religion upon him.* All that one hears of it, is, that he liv'd like a Proteſtant, and dy'd like a Papiſt. I ſuppoſe, your Lordſhip will allow, that ſeveral who were lately Papiſts, are now true Proteſtants: I deſire therefore to know, what is become of the *Fatal, Natural, and Certain Effects of their Religion?*

My Lord, I beg of you to lay your Hand again upon your Heart, and ask, whether this be ſtrict Reaſoning? Whether it is poſſible in the very Nature of the thing, *that ſuch Fatal, Natural and Certain* Effects ſhould follow ſuch a *Giddy, Whimſical, Uncertain* Thing, as *Human and Free Choice?* My Lord, is it neither poſſible for Papiſts to change or conceal their Religion for Intereſt, or leave it through a Conſcientious Conviction? If the former is impoſſible, then, according to your Lordſhip, it is

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the *safest Religion* in the World; because they are all sure of being *sincere*, and consequently the first Favourites of God. If the latter is impossible, then a great many *Fine Sermons and Discourses* have been written to as wise Purposes, as if they had been directed to the *Wind.*

I come now to your Lordship's Definition of *Prayer*, a *Calm and Undisturb'd Address to God.* It seems very strange, that so great a Master of Words, as your Lordship, should pick out Two so very exceptionable, that all your Lordship's Skill could not defend them, but by leaving their first and obvious Sense. Who would not take *Calm* and *Undisturb'd* to be very like *Quiet* and *Unmov'd?* Yet your Lordship dislikes these Expressions. But if these don't give us a true *Idea* of *Prayer*, you have made a very narrow *Escape*, and have given us a Definition of *Prayer*, as *near* to a *wrong one* as possible.

Prayer chiefly consisteth of *Confession* and *Petition.* Now to be *calm*, and free from *Worldly Passions*, is a necessary Temper to the right Discharge of such *Duties:* But why our *Confession* must be so *Calm*, and free from all *Perturbation* of Spirit; why our Petitions may not have all that Fervour and Warmth with which either *Nature* or *Grace* can supply, is very surprizing.

World,

My Lord, we are advis'd to be *Dead to the World*; and I humbly suppose, no more is *implied* in it, than to keep our Affections from being too much engaged in it; and that a *Calm Undisturb'd*, i. e. *Dispassionate* Use of the World is very *consistent* with our being dead to it. If so, then this *Calm Undisturbed Address to Heaven, is a kind of Prayer* that is very consistent with our being *Dead to Heaven.*

We are forbid to *love* the World; and yet no greater *Abstraction* from it is requir'd, than to use it *Calm* and *Undisturb'd.* We are commanded to *set our Affections on Things above*; and yet, according to your Lordship, the *same Calm, Undisturb'd Temper is enough.* According to this therefore, we are to be *affected*, or rather *Unaffected* alike, with *this*, and the *next* World; since we are to be *Calm* and *Undisturbed* with respect to *both.*

The Reason your Lordship offers for this *Definition* of Prayer, is this; because you * *look upon Calmness and Undisturbedness to be the* Ornament and Defence *of Human Understanding in all its Actions.* My Lord, this plainly supposes, there is no such thing as the *Right Use* of our *Passions:* For if we could ever use them to any Advantage, then it could not be the *Ornament* of our Nature, to be *dispassionate alike* in *all* its Actions. It is as much the

* *Answ. p.* 11.

Ornament and *Defence* of our Nature, to be differently *Affected* with Things, according to their *respective Differences*, as 'tis to understand or conceive *different Things* according to their real Difference. It would be no *Ornament* or *Credit* to us to conceive no Difference betwixt a *Mountain* and a *Mole-Hill*: And our Rational Nature is as much disgrac'd when we are no more *affected* with *great* Things than with *small*. It is the Essential *Ornament* of our Nature, to be as sensibly *affected* in a different Manner with the different Degrees of Goodness of Things, as 'tis to perceive exactly the different *Natures* or Relations of Things. *Passion* is no more a Crime, *as such*, than the Understanding is, *as such*: 'Tis nothing but mistaking the *Value* of Objects, that makes it criminal. An *Infinite Good* cannot be too *passionately* desir'd; nor a *Real* Evil too *vehemently* abhorr'd. *Mere Philosophy*, my Lord, would teach us, that the *Dignity* of *Human Nature* is best declar'd by a *Pungent Uneasiness* for the *Misery* of Sin, and a *Passionate warm Application* to Heaven for Assistance. Let us now consult the Scripture. St. *Paul* describes a *Godly* Sorrow something different from your Lordship's *Calm* and *Undisturbed Temper*, in these Words: *When ye sorrowed after a Godly sort, what* Carefulness *it wrought in you! Yea, what* Indignation, *yea, what* Fear, *yea, what* Zeal, *yea, what* Revenge! (2 *Cor.* 7. 11.) My Lord, I suppose, *these*

these are not so many other Words for *Calm* and *Undisturb'd*. Yet as different as they are, the Apostle makes them the *Qualities* of a *Godly Sorrow*. And all this at the Expence of that *Calmness* which your Lordship terms the *Ornament* of Human Nature. Dr. *Snape* pleads for the *Fervency* and *Ardour* of our Devotions, from our Saviour's *praying more earnestly* before his *Passion*.

Your Lordship replies, that *this* can give no Direction as to our *daily Prayers*; because it was what our *Saviour* himself knew nothing of, but this once. The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* knew nothing of this way of Reasoning. For as an Argument for *Daily Patience*, he bids us look unto *Jesus*, who endur'd the *Cross*, because he dy'd for us, leaving us an *Example*.

Our Saviour, my Lord, *suffer'd* and *dy'd* but *once*: Yet is it made a Reason for our *daily Patience*, and propos'd as an *Example* for us to imitate.

If therefore, my Lord, his Passion, so *extraordinary* in it self, and as much above the Power of Human Nature to bear, as the *Intenseness* of his Devotions *exceeded* our Capacities for Prayer, be yet proposed as an *Example* to us in the *ordinary* Calamities of Life; how comes it, that his *Devotion* at that time should have no manner of Use or Direction in it as to our Devotions, especially in our *Distress*? How comes it, that his Suffering should have so much of *Example* in it, so much to be imitated; but the Manner of his *Devotion then* have nothing of Instruction, nothing that need be imitated by us? All the Reason that is offer'd, is the *Singularity* and *Extraordinariness* of it, when the same may be said of his *Passion*; yet that is allow'd to be an *Example*.

Your Lordſhip is pleaſed, for the Information of your *Unwary Readers*, to reaſon thus upon the Place: *If this be the Example of our Saviour*, to aſſure us of his *Will about the Temper* neceſſary *to* Prayer; *it will follow, that our Bleſſed Lord Himſelf never truly prayed before this time: And yet again, if he prayed more earneſtly, it will follow, that he had prayed before; and conſequently, that this Temper in which He now was, was not* neceſſary *to* Prayer.

My Lord, one would think this Elaborate Proof was againſt ſomething aſſerted. Here you have indeed a thorough Conqueſt; but it is over *no body*. For did any one ever aſſert, that ſuch *Extraordinary Earneſtneſs* was neceſſary to Prayer? Does Dr. *Snape*, or any Divines allow of no *Prayers*, except we *ſweat Drops of Blood*? Will your Lordſhip ſay, that the *Neceſſity* of this Temper is imply'd in the Quotation of this Text, as a Direction for Prayer? I anſwer, juſt as much, as we are all *obliged* to die upon the *Croſs*, becauſe his *Sufferings* there are propoſed to us as an *Example*.

The plain Truth of the Matter, my Lord, I take to be this: Our *Saviour's Sufferings* on the Croſs were ſuch as no Mortal can undergo; yet they are juſtly propos'd as an *Example* to us to bear with Patience ſuch Sufferings as are within the Compaſs of Human Nature. His Earneſt Devotion before this Paſſion, far *exceeded* any *Fervours* which the Devouteſt of Mankind can attain to: Yet is it juſtly propos'd to us as an *Example*, to excite us to be as Fervent as we can; and may be juſtly alleg'd in our Defence, when our *warm* and *paſſionate* Addreſſes to God in our *Calamities*, are condemned as *Superſtitious Folly*. My Lord, muſt nothing be an *Example*, but what we can *exactly*

actly come up to? How then can the *Life* of our *Saviour*, which was entirely free from *Sin*, be an Example to us? How could it be said in Scripture, *Be ye holy, for I am holy?* Can any one be *Holy* as *God is?*

My Lord, one might properly urge the *Practice* of the Primitive Christians, who parted with *all* they had for the Support of their *Indigent Brethren*, as an Argument for *Charity*, without designing to oblige People to part with all they have: And *he* that should in answer to such an *Argument*, tell the World, that *Charity* is only a *calm undisturb'd Good Will to all Mankind*, would *just* as much set forth the *true Doctrine of Charity*, as He that defines Prayer to be a *Calm and Undisturbed Address to Heaven*, for *no other Reason*, but because no *certain Degrees* of Fervour or Affection are necessarily requir'd to constitute Devotion. My Lord, has *Charity* nothing to do with the *Distribution of Alms*, because no certain Allowance is fix'd? Why then must *Prayer* have nothing to do with *Heat* and *Fervency*, because no fix'd Degrees of it are necessary?

Therefore, my Lord, as I would define *Charity*, to be a Pious Distribution of so much of our Goods to the Poor, as is suitable to our Circumstance; so I would define *Prayer*, an *Address* to *Heaven, enlivened with such Degrees of* Fervour *and* Intenseness, *as our* Natural Temper, *influenc'd* with a true Sense *of God, could beget in us.*

Your Lordship says, you only desire to strike at the Root of *Superstitious Folly*, and *establish* Prayer *in its Room*; And this is to be effected by making our Addresses *calm and undisturb'd*; by which we are to understand, a *Freedom* from *Heat and Passion*, as your Lordship explains it, by an Application to your self.

If

If therefore, any one should happen to be so *disturb'd* at his Sins, as to offer a *Broken* and *Contrite Heart* to God, instead of one *calm* and *undisturb'd*; or, like Holy *David*, his Soul should be a-thirst for God, or pant after him, as the *Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks*, this would not be *Prayer*, but *Superstitious Folly*.

My Lord, *Calmness* of *Temper*, as it signifies a *Power* over our *Passions*, is a *Happy Circumstance* of a *Rational Nature*, but no farther: When the Object is well chosen, there is no Danger in the Pursuit.

The Calmness your Lordship hath describ'd, is fit for a *Philosopher*, in his *Study*, who is solving *Mathematical Problems*. But if he should come abroad into the World, thus entirely empty of all Passion, he would live to as much Purpose as if he had left his Understanding behind him.

What a fine Subject, my Lord, would such a one make, who, when he heard of *Plots*, *Invasions*, and *Rebellions*, would continue as *calm* and *undisturb'd* as when he was *comparing Lines and Figures*: Such a calm Subject, would scarce be taken for any *Great Loyalist*.

Your Lordship in other Places, hath recommended an *open* and *undisguis'd* Zeal *, and told us such things as ought to *alarm the Coldest Heart* †. Sure, my Lord, this is something more than *Calm* and *Undisturb'd*: And will your Lordship, who hath expressed so much Concern for this *Ornament and Defence of Human Understanding*, persuade us to part with the least *Degree* of it upon any account? I am, my Lord, (with all the Respect that is due to your Lordship's Station and Character)

Your most Humble and Obedient Servant,

William Law.

* *Serm.* 5. Nov. p. 5. † *Serm.* p. 14.

A SECOND

LETTER

TO THE

Bishop of *BANGOR*;

WHEREIN

His Lordship's NOTIONS

OF

Benediction, *Absolution*, and *Church-Communion*,

Are proved to be Destructive of every Institution of the *Christian Religion*.

To which is added, A

POSTSCRIPT,

In Answer to the OBJECTIONS that have been made against his former Letter.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

The FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in Pater-noster-Row.

MDCCLXII.

Price One Shilling.

My LORD,

A Juſt Concern for Truth, and the Firſt Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, was the only Motive that engaged me in the Examination of your Lordſhip's Doctrines, in a former Letter to your Lordſhip. And the ſame Motive, I hope, will be thought a ſufficient Apology for my preſuming to give your Lordſhip the Trouble of a Second Letter.

Amongſt the Vain Contemptible Things, whereof your Lordſhip would create an Abhorrence in the Laity, are, the *Trifles* and *Niceties of Authoritative Benedictions*, *Abſolutions*, *Excommunications* *. Again, you ſay, that *to expect the Grace of God from any Hands, but his own, is to affront him* ——†. And *that all depends upon God and ourſelves*; *That Human Benedictions*, *Human Abſolutions*, *Human Excommunications*, *have nothing to do with the Favour of God* ‖.

It is evident from theſe Maxims (for your Lordſhip aſſerts them as ſuch) that whatever Inſtitutions are obſerved in any Chriſtian Society, upon this Suppoſition, that thereby Grace is conferred through *Human Hands*, or by the Miniſtry of the Clergy, ſuch Inſtitutions ought to be condemned, and are condemned by your Lordſhip, as *trifling*, *uſeleſs*, *and affronting to God*.

There is an *Inſtitution*, my Lord, in the *yet* Eſtabliſhed Church of *England*, which we call *Confirmation*: It is founded upon the expreſs Words of Scripture, Primitive Obſervance, and the Univerſal Practice of all ſucceeding Ages in the Church. The Deſign of this Inſtitution is, that it ſhould be a Means

* *Preſervative*, p. 98. † P. 89. ‖ P. 101.

of conferring Grace, by the Prayer and Impoſition of the *Biſhop's Hands* on thoſe who have been already Baptized. But yet againſt all this Authority, both Divine and Human, and the expreſs Order of our own Church, your Lordſhip teaches the Laity, *that all Human Benedictions are uſeleſs Niceties*; and *that to expect God's Grace from any Hands but his own, is to affront him.*

If ſo, my Lord, what ſhall we ſay in Defence of the Apoſtles? We read (*Acts* 8. 14.) that when *Philip* the Deacon had baptized the *Samaritans*, the Apoſtles ſent *Peter* and *John* to them, who having prayed, and *laid their Hands on them, they received the Holy Ghoſt, who before was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jeſus.*

My Lord, ſeveral things are here out of Queſtion; *Firſt*, That ſomething elſe, even in the Apoſtolical Times, was neceſſary, beſides Baptiſm, in order to qualify Perſons to become compleat Members of the Body, or Partakers of the Grace of Chriſt. They had been baptized, yet did not receive the Holy Ghoſt, till the Apoſtles Hands were laid upon them. *2dly*, That God's Graces are not only conferred by means of *Human Hands*, but of ſome particular Hands, and not others. *3dly*, That this Office was ſo ſtrictly appropriated to the Apoſtles, or Chief Governors of the Church, that it could not be performed by inſpired Men, though empowered to work Miracles, who were of an inferior Order; as *Philip* the Deacon. *4thly*, That the Power of the Apoſtles for the Performance of this Ordinance, was entirely owing to their ſuperior Degree in the Miniſtry, and not to any extraordinary Gifts they were endowed with: For then *Philip* might have performed it; who was not wanting in thoſe Gifts, being himſelf an Evangeliſt, and Worker of Miracles: Which is a Demonſtration, that his Incapacity aroſe from his inferior Degree in the Miniſtry.

And

And now, my Lord, are all *human Benedictions Niceties and Trifles?* Are the Means of God's Grace in his *own Hands alone?* Is it wicked, and *affronting to God*, to suppose the contrary? How then comes *Peter* and *John* to confer the Holy Ghost by the Imposition of their Hands? How comes it, that they appropriate this Office to themselves? Is the Dispensation of God's Grace in his *own Hands alone?* And yet can it be dispensed to us by the Ministry of some Persons, and not by that of others?

Were the Apostles so wicked as to distinguish themselves by a Pretence to vain Powers, which God had reserved to himself; And which your Lordship supposes, from the Title of your *Preservative*, that it is inconsistent with *common Sense*, to imagine that God could or would have communicated to Men?

Had any of your Lordship's well-instructed Laity lived in the Apostles Days, with what Indignation must they have rejected this senseless chimerical *Claim* of the Apostles? They must have said, Why do you, *Peter* or *John*, pretend to this *Blasphemous Power? Whilst we believe the Gospel, we cannot expect the Grace of God from any Hands but his own.* You give us the *Holy Ghost!* You confer the Grace of God! Is it not impious to think, that *he should make our Improvement* in Grace depend upon your Ministry; or hang our Salvation on any *particular* Order of Clergymen? We know, that God is Just, and Good, and True, *and that all* depends upon Him and ourselves, and that *human Benedictions* are *Trifles.* Therefore whether you *Peter*, or you *Philip*, or both, or neither of you lay *your* Hands upon us, we are neither better nor worse; but just in the *same State of Grace* as we were before.

This Representation has not one Syllable in it, but what is founded in your Lordship's Doctrine, and perfectly agreeable to it.

The late moſt Pious and Learned Biſhop *Beveridge* has theſe remarkable Words upon *Confirmation:* " How any Biſhops in our Age dare neglect ſo con- " ſiderable a Part of their Office, I know not; but " fear they will have no good Account to give of it, " *when they come to ſtand before God's Tribunal* *."

But we may juſtly, and therefore I hope, with Decency, aſk your Lordſhip, how you dare perform this Part of your Office? For you have condemned it as *Trifling* and *Wicked*; as *Trifling*, becauſe it is an *human Benediction*; as *Wicked*, becauſe it ſuppoſes Grace conferred by the *Hands of the Biſhop*. If therefore any baptized Perſons ſhould come to your Lordſhip for Confirmation, if you are *ſincere* in what you have delivered, your Lordſhip ought, I humbly conceive, to make them this Declaration:

" My Friends, for the ſake of *Decency* and *Order*, " I have taken upon me the Epiſcopal Character; " and, according to Cuſtom, which has long pre- " vailed againſt common Senſe, am now to lay my " Hands upon you: But I beſeech you, as you " have any Regard to the Truth of the Goſpel, or " to the Honour of God, not to imagine there is " any thing in this Action, more than an uſeleſs " empty Ceremony: For if you expect to have " any Spiritual Advantage from *human Benedictions*, " or to receive Grace from the Impoſition of a " Biſhop's Hands, you affront God, and in effect, " renounce Chriſtianity."

Pray, my Lord, conſider that Paſſage in the Scripture, where the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *Leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and going on unto Perfection; not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, of Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptiſms, and of Laying on of Hands, and of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and of eternal Judgment*, (Heb. vi. 1, 2.)

My

* *Firſt Volume of Sermons.*

My Lord, here it is undeniably plain, that this Laying on of Hands (which is with us called *Confirmation*) is ſo fundamental a Part of Chriſt's Religion, that it is called one of the firſt Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt; and is placed amongſt ſuch primary Truths, as the Reſurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment.

St. *Cyprian* ſpeaking of this Apoſtolical Impoſition of Hands, ſays, *The ſame is now practiſed with us; they who have been baptiſed in the Church, are brought to the Preſidents of the Church, that by our Prayer and Impoſition of Hands, they may receive the Holy Ghoſt, and be conſummated with the Lord's Seal.*

And muſt we yet believe, that all *human Benedictions* are Dreams, and the Impoſition of human Hands trifling and uſeleſs; and that to expect God's Graces from them, is to affront him; though the Scriptures expreſsly teach us, that God confers his Grace by means of certain *particular human Hands*, and not of others; though they tell us, this *human Benediction*, this Laying on of Hands, is one of the firſt Principles of the Religion of Chriſt, and as much a Foundation-Doctrine, as the Reſurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment; and though every Age ſince that of the Apoſtles, has ſtrictly obſerved it as ſuch, and the Authority of our own Church ſtill requires the Obſervance of it?

I come now, my Lord, to another ſacred and Divine Inſtitution of Chriſt's Church, which ſtands expoſed and condemned by your Lordſhip's Doctrine; and that is, the *Ordination* of the Chriſtian Clergy; where, by means of an human Benediction, and the Impoſition of the Biſhop's Hands, the Holy Ghoſt is ſuppoſed to be conferred on Perſons towards conſecrating them for the Work of the Miniſtry.

We find it conſtantly taught by the Scriptures, that all Eccleſiaſtical Authority, and the Graces whereby the Clergy are qualified and enabled to ex-

erciſe their Functions to the Benefit of the Church, are the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Apoſtle exhorts the Elders *to take heed unto the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them Overſeers*, (Eph. iv. 7.) But how, my Lord, had the Holy Ghoſt made them Overſeers, but by the laying on of the Apoſtles Hands? They were not immediately called by the Holy Ghoſt; but being conſecrated by *ſuch human Hands* as had been authorized to that Purpoſe, they were as truly called by him, and ſanctified with Grace for that Employment, as if they had received an immediate or miraculous Commiſſion. So again, St. *Paul* puts *Timothy* in mind *to ſtir up the Gift of God that was in him, by laying on of his Hands*, (2 Tim. ii. 6.)

And now, my Lord, if *human Benedictions* be ſuch idle *Dreams* and *Trifles*; if it be *affronting to God*, to expect his Graces from them, or through *human Hands*; do we not plainly want new Scriptures? Muſt we not give up the Apoſtles as furious High-Church Prelates, who aſpired to preſumptuous Claims, and talked of conferring the Graces of God by their own Hands? Was not this Doctrine as ſtrange and unaccountable then, as at preſent? Was it not as inconſiſtent with the Attributes and Sovereignty of God at that Time, to have his Graces paſs through other Hands than his own, as in any ſucceeding Age? Nay, my Lord, where ſhall we find any Fathers or Councils, in the primitive Church, but who owned and aſſerted theſe Powers? They that were ſo ready to part with their Lives, rather than do the leaſt Diſhonour to God, or the Chriſtian Name, yet were all guilty of *this horrid Blaſphemy*, in imagining that they were to bleſs in God's Name; and that by the Benediction and laying on of the Biſhop's Hands, the Graces of the Holy Ghoſt could be conferred on any Perſons.

Agreeable

Agreeable to the Senſe of Scripture and Antiquity, our Church uſes this Form of Ordination: *The Biſhop laying his Hands on the Perſon's Head, ſaith, Receive the Holy Ghoſt, for the Office and Work of a Prieſt in the Church of God, committed unto thee, by the Impoſition of our Hands.* From this Form, it is plain, *Firſt*, That our Church holds, that the Reception of the Holy Ghoſt is neceſſary to conſtitute a Perſon a Chriſtian Prieſt. *Secondly*, That the Holy Ghoſt is conferred through *human Hands*. *Thirdly*, That it is by the Hands of a Biſhop that the Holy Ghoſt is conferred.

If, therefore, your Lordſhip is right in your Doctrine, the Church of *England* is evidently moſt corrupt: For if it be diſhonourable and affronting to God, to expect his Grace from any human Hands, it muſt of Neceſſity be diſhonourable and affronting to him, for a Biſhop to pretend to confer it by his Hands. And can that Church be any ways defended, that has eſtabliſhed ſuch an Iniquity by Law, and made the Form of it ſo neceſſary? How can your Lordſhip anſwer it to your Laity, for taking the Character or Power of a Biſhop from ſuch a Form of Words? You tell them it is affronting to God, to expect his Grace from *human Hands*; yet, to qualify your ſelf for a Biſhoprick, you let human Hands be laid on you, after a Manner which directly ſuppoſes you thereby receive the Holy Ghoſt! Is it wicked in them to expect it from *human Hands?* And is it leſs ſo in your Lordſhip, to pretend to receive it from human Hands? He that believes it is affronting to God, to expect his Grace from human Hands, muſt likewiſe believe, that our Form of Ordination, which promiſes the Holy Ghoſt by the *Biſhop's Hands*, muſt be alſo affronting to God. Certainly he cannot be ſaid to be very jealous of the Honour of God, who will ſubmit himſelf to be made a Biſhop by a Form of Words derogatory, upon his own Principles, to God's Honour.

Suppoſe your Lordſhip was to have been conſecrated to the Office of a Biſhop by theſe Words; *Take thou Power to ſuſtain all Things in Being, given thee by my Hands.* I ſuppoſe your Lordſhip would think it entirely unlawful to ſubmit to the Form of ſuch an Ordination. But, my Lord, *Receive thou the Holy Ghoſt*, &c. is as impious a Form, according to your Lordſhip's Doctrine, and equally injurious to the eternal Power and Godhead, as the other. For if the Grace of God can only be had from *his own* Hands, would it not be as innocent in the Biſhop to ſay, *Receive thou Power to ſuſtain all Things in Being*, as to ſay, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt, by the Impoſition of my Hands?* And would not a Compliance with either Form be equally unlawful? According to your Doctrine, in each of them God's Prerogative is equally invaded, and therefore the Guilt muſt be the ſame.

It may alſo well be wondered, how your Lordſhip can accept of a Character, which is, or ought to be, chiefly diſtinguiſhed by the Exerciſe of that Power which you diſclaim, as in the Offices of *Confirmation* and *Ordination.* For, my Lord, where can be the Sincerity of ſaying, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt by the Impoſition of our Hands*, when you declare it affronting to God, to expect it from any Hands but his own? Suppoſe your Lordſhip had been preaching to the Laity againſt owning any Authority in the Virgin *Mary*, and yet ſhould acquieſce in the Conditions of being made a Biſhop in her Name, and by recognizing her Power; could ſuch a Submiſſion be conſiſtent with Sincerity? Here you forbid the Laity to expect God's Grace from any Hands but his; yet not only accept of an Office, upon Suppoſition of the contrary Doctrine; but oblige your ſelf according to the Senſe of the Church wherein you are ordained a Biſhop, to act frequently in direct Oppoſition to your own Principles.

So

So that, I think, it is undeniably plain, that you have at once, my Lord, by these Doctrines condemned the Scriptures, the Apostles, their martyred Successors, the Church of *England*, and your own Conduct; and have thereby given us some Reason (though I wish there were no Occasion to mention it) to suspect, whether you, who allow of no other Church, but what is founded in Sincerity, are your self really a Member of any Church.

I shall now proceed to say something upon the Consecration of the Lord's Supper, which is as much exposed as a *Trifle*, by your Lordship's Doctrine, as the other Institutions. St. *Paul* says, *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?* My Lord, is not this Cup still to be blessed? Must there not therefore be such a Thing as an *human Benediction?* And are human Benedictions to be all despised, though by them the Bread and Wine become Means of Grace, and are made the spiritual Nourishment of our Souls? Can any one bless this Cup? If not, then there is a Difference between human Benedictions: Some are authorized by God, and their Blessing is effectual; whilst others only are vain and presumptuous. If the Prayer over the Elements, and the Consecration, be only a Trifle and a Dream, and it be offensive to God to expect they are converted into Means of Grace by an human Benediction; why then did St. *Paul* pretend to bless them? Why did he make it the Privilege of the Church? Or, why do we keep up the same Solemnity? But if it be to be blessed only by God's Ministers, then how can your Lordship answer it to God, for ridiculing and abusing human Benedictions, and telling the World that a particular Order of the Clergy are not of any Necessity, nor can be of any Advantage to them? For if the Sacrament can only be blessed by God's Ministers, then such Ministers are as necessary as the Sacraments themselves.

St.

St. *Paul* says, the Cup must be blessed: If you say, any one may bless it, then, though you contemn the Benedictions of the Clergy, you allow of them by every body else: If every Body cannot bless it, then you must confess; that the Benedictions of some Persons are effectual, where others are not.

My Lord, the great Sin against the Holy Ghost, was the Denial of his Operation in the Ministry of our Saviour. And how near does your Lordship come to it, in denying the Operation of that same Spirit, in the Ministers whom Christ hath sent? They are employed in the same Work that he was. He left his Authority with them, and promised that the Holy Spirit should remain with them to the End of the World; that whatsoever they should bind on Earth, should be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever they should loose on Earth, should be loosed in Heaven; and that whosoever despises them, despises him, and him that sent him. And yet your Lordship tells us, we need not to trouble our Heads about any particular Sort of Clergy; that all is to be transacted betwixt God and ourselves; that human Benedictions are insignificant Trifles.

But pray what Proof has your Lordship for all this? Have you any Scripture for it? Has God any where declared that no Men on Earth have any Authority to bless in his Name? Has he any where said, that it is a wicked, presumptuous Thing, for any one to pretend to it? Has he any where told us that it is inconsistent with his Honour to bestow his Graces by *human Hands?* Has he any where told us that he has no Ministers, no Ambassadors on Earth; but that all his Gifts and Graces are to be received immediately from his own Hands? Have you any Antiquity, Fathers, or Councils, on your Side? No; the whole Tenor of Scripture, the whole Current of Tradition is against you: Your novel Doctrine has only this to recommend it to the Libertines of the

Age, who univerſally give into it, that it never was the Opinion of any Church, or Churchman. It is your Lordſhip's proper Aſſertion, *That we offend God in expecting his Graces from any Hands but his own.*

Now it is ſtrange, that God ſhould be offended with his own Methods, or that your Lordſhip ſhould find us out a Way of pleaſing him, more ſuitable to his Nature and Attributes, than what he has taught us in the Scriptures. I call them his own Methods; for what elſe is the whole *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, but a Method of God's Providence, where his Bleſſings and Judgments were diſpenſed by *human Hands?* What is the Chriſtian Religion but a Method of Salvation, where the chief Means of Grace are offered and diſpenſed by human Hands? Let me here recommend to your Lordſhip, the excellent Words of a very learned and judicious Prelate on this Occaſion.

" This will have no Weight with any reaſonable " Man, againſt the Cenſures of the Church, or " any other Ordinance of the Goſpel, that they " make the Intervention of other Men neceſſary " to our Salvation; ſince it has always been God's " ordinary Method, to diſpenſe his Bleſſings and " Judgments by the Hands of Men." *

Your Lordſhip exclaims againſt your Adverſaries as ſuch romantick ſtrange ſort of Men, for talking of Benedictions and Abſolutions, and of the Neceſſity of receiving God's Ordinances from proper Hands: Yet, my Lord, here is an excellent Biſhop, againſt whoſe *Learning*, *Judgment*, and *Proteſtantiſm*, there can be no Objection; who ſays, if a Perſon has but the *Uſe of his Reaſon*, he will have nothing to object to any Ordinances of the Goſpel, which make the Intervention of other Men neceſſary towards the Conveyance of them, ſince that has always been God's ordinary Method. The Biſhop does not ſay, it is neceſſary a Man ſhould be a *great Divine*

* *Dr.* Potter's *Church Government*, p. 336.

Divine to acknowledge it; ſo he be but a *reaſonable Man*, he will allow it. Yet your Lordſhip is ſo far from being this *reaſonable Man*, that you think your Adverſaries void both of Reaſon and common Senſe, for teaching it. You expreſsly exclude *all* Perſons from having any Thing to do with our Salvation, and ſay, it wholly depends upon God and our ſelves.

You tell us, that *authoritative Benediction is another of the Terms of Art uſed by your Proteſtant Adverſaries; in which they claim a Right, in one regular Succeſſion, of bleſſing the People* *. An ingenious Author, my Lord, (in the Opinion of many, if not of moſt of your Friends) calls the *Conſecration* of the Elements *Conjuration* †: Your Lordſhip calls the *Sacerdotal Benediction* a *Term of Art*; too plain an Intimation, though in more remote and ſomewhat ſofter Terms, that in the Senſe of a *certain Father* of the Church, her Clergy are little better than ſo many Jugglers.

Your Lordſhip ſays, *If they only meant hereby to declare upon what Terms God will give his Bleſſings* to Chriſtians, *or to expreſs their own hearty Wiſhes for them, this might be underſtood.* So it might, my Lord, very eaſily; and I ſuppoſe every Body underſtands that they may do this, whether they be Clergy or Laity, Men or Women: For I preſume any one may declare what he takes to be the Terms of the Goſpel, and wiſh that others may faithfully obſerve them. But I humbly preſume, my Lord, that the good Biſhop abovementioned meant ſomething more than this, when he ſpake of *Ordinances which make the Intervention of other Men* neceſſary *to our Salvation, and of God's diſpenſing his Bleſſings* in virtue of them through their Hands.

There is a ſuperſtitious Cuſtom (in your Lordſhip's Account it muſt be ſo) yet remaining in moſt Places, of ſending for a Clergyman to miniſter to ſick Perſons in imminent Danger of Death: Even thoſe

* Page 91. † *Rights of the Chriſtian Church.*

thoſe who have abuſed the Clergy all their Lives long, are glad to beg their Aſſiſtance when they apprehend themſelves upon the Confines of another World. There is no Reaſon, my Lord, to diſlike this *Practice*, but as it ſuppoſes a Difference between the *Sacerdotal Prayers* and *Benedictions*, and thoſe of a Nurſe.

We read, my Lord, that God would not heal *Abimelech*, though he knew the Integrity of his Heart, till *Abraham* had prayed for him: *He is a Prophet*, ſaid God, *he ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live*, (Gen. xx. 7.)

Pray, my Lord, was not God juſt, and good, and true, in the Days of *Abraham*, as he is now? Yet you ſee, *Abimelech*'s *Integrity* was not available it ſelf. He was to be pardoned by the Prayer of *Abraham*, and his Prayer was effectual; and ſo repreſented, becauſe it was the Prayer of a *Prophet*.

Suppoſe, my Lord, that *Abimelech* had ſaid with your Lordſhip, *That it is affronting to God, that we ſhould expect his Graces from any Hands* but his own; *that all is to be tranſacted between God and our ſelves*; and ſo had rejected the Prayer of *Abraham*, as a mere Eſſay of *Prophet-Craft*; he had then acted with as much Prudence and Piety as your Lordſhip's Laity would do, if you could perſuade them to deſpiſe *Benedictions* and *Abſolutions*, to regard no *particular ſort of Clergy*; but entirely depend upon God and themſelves, without any other Aſſiſtance whatever.

We read alſo, *that* Joſhua *was full of the Spirit of Wiſdom, for* Moſes *had laid his Hands upon him*, (Deut. xxxiv. 9.) Was it not as abſurd, my Lord, in the Days of *Joſhua*, for *human Hands* to *bleſs*, as it is now? Did there not then lie the ſame Objection againſt *Moſes*, that there does now againſt the Chriſtian Clergy? Had *Moſes* any more *natural Power* to give the Spirit of Wiſdom, *&c.* by his Hands, than the Clergy have to confer Grace by theirs?

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They are both equally weak and insufficient for these Purposes of themselves, and equally powerful when it pleases God to make them so.

Again, when *Eliphaz* and his Friends had displeased God, they were not to be reconciled to God by their own Repentance, or transact that Matter only between God and themselves; but they were referred to apply to *Job*. *My Servant* Job *shall pray for you, for him will I accept*, (Job. xlii. 8.) Might not *Eliphaz* here have said, shall I so far affront God, as to think I cannot be blessed without the Prayers of *Job?* Shall I be so weak or senseless, as to imagine, my own Supplications and Repentance will not save me; or that I need apply to any one but God alone, to qualify me for the Reception of his Grace?

Again, *The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, on this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying unto them*, The Lord bless and keep thee, *&c. and I will bless them*, (Numb. vi. 22.)

Again, *The Priests of the Sons of Levi shall come near; for them hath the Lord thy God chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the Name of the Lord*, (Deut. xxi. 5.)

Now, my Lord, this is what we mean by the authoritative Administrations of the Christian Clergy; whether they be by way of Benediction, or of any other kind. We take them to be Persons whom God has chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in his Name. We imagine that our Saviour was a greater *Priest and Mediator* than *Aaron*, or any of God's former Ministers. We are assured that Christ sent his Apostles, as his Father had sent him, and that therefore they were his true Successors: And since they did commission others to succeed them in their Office, by the Imposition of Hands, as *Moses* commissioned *Joshua* to succeed him; the Clergy who have succeeded the Apostles, have as divine a Call

Call and Commiſſion to their Work, as thoſe who were called by our Saviour; and are as truly his Succeſſors, as the Apoſtles themſelves were.

From the Places of Scripture above-mentioned, it is evident, and indeed from the whole Tenor of Sacred Writ, that it may conſiſt with the Goodneſs and Juſtneſs of God to depute Men to act in his Name, and be miniſterial towards the Salvation of others; and to lay a Neceſſity upon his Creatures of qualifying themſelves for his Favour, and receiving his Graces by the Hands and Intervention of mere Men.

But, my Lord, if there be now any Set of Men upon Earth that are more peculiarly God's Miniſters than others, and through whoſe Adminiſtrations, Prayers, and Benedictions, God will accept of returning Sinners, and receive them to Grace; you have done all you can to prejudice People againſt them: You have taught the Laity that all is to be tranſacted between God and themſelves, and that they need not value any particular Sort of Clergy in the World.

I leave it to the Great Judge and Searcher of Hearts, to judge from what Principles, or upon what Motives your Lordſhip has been induced to teach theſe Things; but muſt declare, that, for my own Part, if I had the greateſt Hatred to Chriſtianity, I ſhould think it could not be more expreſſed than by teaching what your Lordſhip has publickly taught. If I could rejoice in the Miſery and Ruin of Sinners, I ſhould think it ſufficient Matter of Triumph, to drive them from the Miniſters of God, and to put them upon inventing new Schemes of ſaving themſelves, inſtead of ſubmitting to the ordinary Methods of Salvation appointed by God.

It will not follow from any thing I have ſaid, that the Laity have loſt their Chriſtian Liberty, or that no Body can be ſaved but whom the Clergy pleaſe

pleaſe to ſave; that they have the arbitrary Diſpoſal of Happineſs to Mankind. Was *Abimelech*'s Happineſs in the Diſpoſition of *Abraham*, becauſe he was to be received by Means of *Abraham*'s Interceſſion? Or could *Job* damn *Eliphaz*, becauſe he was to mediate for him, and procure his Reconciliation to God?

Neither, my Lord, do the *Chriſtian Clergy* pretend to this deſpotick Empire over their Flocks. They do not aſſume to themſelves a Power to damn the Innocent, or to ſave the Guilty; but they aſſert a ſober and juſt Right to reconcile Men to God, and to act in his Name, in reſtoring them to his Favour. They received their Commiſſion from thoſe whom Chriſt ſent with full Authority to ſend others, and with a Promiſe that he would be with them to the End of the World. From this they conclude, that they have his Authority, and that in conſequence of it, their Adminiſtrations are neceſſary, and effectual to the Salvation of Mankind; and that none can deſpiſe them, but who deſpiſe him that ſent them; and are as ſurely out of the Covenant of Grace, when they leave ſuch his Paſtors, as when they openly deſpiſe, or omit to receive his Sacraments.

And what is there in this Doctrine, my Lord, to terrify the *Conſciences* of the *Laity?* What is there here to bring the profane Scandal of *Prieſtcraft* upon the *Clergy?* Could it be any Ground of *Abimelech*'s hating *Abraham*, becauſe that *Abraham* was to reconcile him to God? Could *Eliphaz* juſtly have any Prejudice againſt *Job*, becauſe God would hear *Job*'s Interceſſion for him? Why then, my Lord, muſt the Chriſtian Prieſthood be ſo horrid and hateful an Inſtitution, becauſe the Deſign of it is to reſtore Men to the Grace and Favour of God? Why muſt we be abuſed and inſulted for being ſent upon the Errand of Salvation, and made Miniſters of eternal Happineſs to our Brethren? There is a Woe due to

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us if we preach not the Gospel, or neglect those ministerial Offices that Christ hath entrusted to us. We are to watch for their Souls, as those who are to give an Account. Why then must we be treated as arrogant Priests, or *popishly* affected, for pretending to have any Thing to do in the Discharge of our *Ministry* with the Salvation of Men? Why must we be reproached with *blasphemous Claims*, and *absurd senseless Powers*; for assuming to bless in God's Name, or thinking our Administrations more effectual than the Office of a common *Layman?*

But farther, To what Purpose does your Lordship except against these Powers in the *Clergy*, from their *common Frailties* and *Infirmities* with the rest of Mankind? Were not *Abraham* and *Job*, and the *Jewish* Priests, Men of like Passions with us? Did not our Saviour command the *Jews* to apply to their Priests, notwithstanding their personal Faults, because they sat in *Moses*'s Chair? Did not the Apostles assure their Followers that they were Men of like Passions with them? But did they therefore disclaim their Mission, or Apostolical Authority? Did they teach, that their natural Infirmities made them less the Ministers of God, or less necessary to the Salvation of Men? Their personal Defects did not make them depart from the Claim of those Powers they were invested with, or desert their Ministry, but, indeed, gave St. *Paul* Occasion to say, *We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels*, (*i. e.* this Authority committed to mere Men) *that the excellency of it may be of God, and not of Men*, The Apostle happens to differ very much from your Lordship: He says, such weak Instruments were made use of that the Glory might redound to God. Your Lordship says, to suppose Instruments to be of any Benefit to us, is to lessen the Sovereignty of God, and, in Consequence, his Glory.

Your Lordſhip imagines you have ſufficiently deſtroyed the *ſacerdotal Powers*, by ſhewing, that the Clergy are only Men, and ſubject to the common Frailties of Mankind. My Lord, we own the Charge, and do not claim any *ſacerdotal Powers* from our perſonal Abilities, or to acquire any Glory to our ſelves. But, weak as we are, we are God's Miniſters, and if we are either afraid or aſhamed of our Duty, we muſt periſh in the Guilt. But is a Prophet therefore proud, becauſe he inſiſts upon the Authority of his Miſſion? Cannot a Mortal be God's Meſſenger, and employed in his Affairs, but he muſt be inſolent and aſſuming, for having the Reſolution to own it? If we are to be reproved for pretending to be God's Miniſters, becauſe we are but Men, the Reproach will fall upon Providence; ſince it has pleaſed God, chiefly to tranſact his Affairs with Mankind by the Miniſtry of their Brethren.

Your Lordſhip has not one Word from Scripture againſt theſe ſacerdotal Powers; no Proof that Chriſt has not ſent Men to be effectual Adminiſtrators of his Graces: You only aſſert, that there can be no ſuch Miniſters, becauſe they are mere Men.

Now, my Lord, I muſt beg Leave to ſay, that if the natural Weakneſs of Men makes them incapable of being the Inſtruments of conveying Grace to their Brethren; if the Clergy cannot be of any Uſe or Neceſſity to their Flocks, for this Reaſon; then it undeniably follows, that there can be no *poſitive Inſtitutions* in the Chriſtian Religion that can procure any ſpiritual Advantages to the Members of it; then the Sacraments can be no longer any Means of Grace. For, I hope, no one thinks that Bread and Wine have any natural Force or Efficacy to convey Grace to the Soul. The Water in Baptiſm has the common Qualities of Water, and is deſtitute of any intrinſick Power to cleanſe the Soul, or purify from Sin. But your Lordſhip will not ſay, becauſe

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it has only the common Nature of Water, that therefore it cannot be a Means of Grace. Why then may not the Clergy, though they have the common Nature of Men, be conſtituted by God, to convey his Graces, and to be miniſterial to the Salvation of their Brethren? Can God conſecrate inanimate Things to ſpiritual Purpoſes, and make them the Means of eternal Happineſs? And is Man the only Creature that he cannot make ſubſervient to his Deſigns? The only *Being*, who is too weak for an Omnipotent God to render effectual towards attaining the Ends of his Grace?

Is it juſt and reaſonable, to reject and deſpiſe the *Miniſtry* and *Benedictions* of Men, becauſe they are Men like ourſelves? And is it not as reaſonable, to deſpiſe the Sprinkling of Water, a Creature below us, a ſenſeleſs and inanimate Creature?

Your Lordſhip therefore, muſt either find us ſome other Reaſon for rejecting the Neceſſity of *human Adminiſtrations*, than becauſe they are *human*; or elſe give up the Sacraments, and *all* poſitive Inſtitutions along with them.

Surely, your Lordſhip muſt have a mighty Opinion of *Naaman* the *Syrian*, who, when the Prophet bid him go waſh in *Jordan* ſeven times, to the end he might be clean from his Leproſy, very *wiſely* remonſtrated, *Are not* Abana *and* Pharpar, *Rivers of* Damaſcus, *better than all the Waters of* Iſrael?

This, my Lord, diſcovered *Naaman*'s great Liberty of Mind; and it is much, this has not been produced before, as an Argument of his being a *Free-Thinker*. He took the Water of *Jordan* to be *only Water*; as your Lordſhip juſtly obſerves a Clergyman to be *only* a Man: And if you had been with him, you could have informed him, that the waſhing *ſeven Times* was a mere *Nicety* and *Triſle* of the Prophet; and that ſince it is God alone who can work *miraculous Cures*, we ought not to think, that

they depend upon any external Means, or any ſtated Number of repeating them.

This, my Lord, is the true Scope and Spirit of your Argument: If the *Syrian* was right in deſpiſing the Water of *Jordan*, becauſe it was only *Water*; your Lordſhip might be right in deſpiſing any particular Order of Clergy, becauſe they are but Men. Your Lordſhip is certainly as right, or as wrong, as he was.

And now, my Lord, let the common Senſe of Mankind here judge, whether, if the Clergy are to be eſteemed as having no Authority, becauſe they are but Men; it does not plainly follow, that every thing elſe, every Inſtitution that has not ſome *natural* Force and Power to produce the Effects deſigned by it, is not alſo to be rejected as equally trifling and ineffectual.

The Sum of the Matter is this: It appears from many expreſs Facts, and indeed, from the whole Series of God's Providence, that it is not only conſiſtent with his Attributes, but alſo agreeable to his ordinary Methods of dealing with Mankind, that he ſhould ſubſtitute Men to act in his Name, and be *authoritatively* employed in conferring his Graces and Favours upon Mankind. It appears, that your Lordſhip's Argument againſt the authoritative Adminiſtrations of the Chriſtian Clergy, does not only contradict thoſe Facts, and condemn the ordinary Method of God's Diſpenſations; but likewiſe proves the Sacraments, and every poſitive Inſtitution of Chriſtianity, to be ineffectual, and as mere *Dreams* and *Trifles*, as the ſeveral *Offices and Orders* of the Clergy.

This, I hope, will be eſteemed a ſufficient Confutation of your Lordſhip's Doctrine, by all who have any true Regard or Zeal for the Chriſtian Religion; and only expect to be ſaved by the Methods of divine Grace propoſed in the Goſpel.

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I ſhall now in a word or two ſet forth the Sacredneſs of the Eccleſiaſtical Character, as it is founded in the New Teſtament; with a particular regard to the Power of conferring Grace, and the Efficacy of human Benedictions.

It appears therein that all ſacerdotal Power is derived from the Holy Ghoſt. Our Saviour himſelf took not that Miniſtry upon him, till he had this Conſecration: And during the time of his Miniſtry, he was under the Guidance and Direction of the Holy Ghoſt. Through the Holy Spirit he gave Commandment to the Apoſtles whom he had choſen. When he ordained them to the Work of the Miniſtry, it was with theſe Words, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt*. Thoſe whom the Apoſtles ordained to the ſame Function, it was by the ſame Authority: They laid their Hands upon the Elders, exhorting them to take care of the Flock of Chriſt, over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them Overſeers.

Hereby they plainly declared, that however this Office was to deſcend from Man to Man through *human Hands*, that it was the Holy Ghoſt which conſecrated them to that Employment, and gave them Authority to execute it.

From this it is alſo manifeſt, that the Prieſthood is a Grace of the Holy Ghoſt: That it is not a Function founded on the Natural or Civil Rights of Mankind, but is derived from the ſpecial Authority of the Holy Ghoſt; and is as truly a poſitive Inſtitution as the Sacraments. So that they who have no Authority to alter the Old Sacraments, and ſubſtitute New ones, have no Power to alter the Old Order of the Clergy, or introduce any other Order of them.

For why can we not change the Sacraments? Is it not, becauſe they are only Sacraments, and operate as they are inſtituted by the Holy Ghoſt? Becauſe they are uſeleſs ineffectual Rites without this Autho-

rity? And does not the same Reason hold as well for the Order of the Clergy? Does not the same Scripture tell us, they are equally instituted by the Holy Ghost, and oblige only by vertue of his Authority? How absurd is it therefore, to pretend to abolish, or depart from the settled Order of the Clergy, to make new Orders, or think any God's Ministers, unless we had his Authority, and could make new Sacraments, or a new Religion?

My Lord, how comes it, That we cannot alter the Scriptures? Is it not, because they are Divinely inspired, and dictated by the Holy Ghost? And since it is express Scripture, That the *Priesthood* is instituted and authorized by the same Holy Spirit, Why is not the Holy Ghost as much to be regarded in one Institution, as in another? Why may we not as well make a Gospel, and say, it was writ by the Holy Ghost, as make a new Order of Clergy, and call them his? Or esteem them as having any relation to him?

From this it likewise appears, That there is an absolute Necessity of a strict Succession of authorized Ordainers from the Apostolical Times, in order to constitute a *Christian Priest*. For since a Commission from the Holy Ghost is necessary for the exercise of this Office; no one now can receive it, but from those who have derived their Authority in a true Succession, from the Apostles. We could not, my Lord, call our present Bibles *the Word of God*, unless we knew the Copies from which they are taken were taken from other true ones, till we come to the Originals themselves. No more could we call any true Ministers, or authorized by the Holy Ghost, who have not received their Commission by an uninterrupted Succession of lawful Ordainers.

What an excellent Divine would he be, who should tell the World, it was not necessary that the several Copies and Manuscripts through which the Scriptures

Scriptures have been tranſmitted through different Ages and Languages, ſhould be all true ones, and none of them forged? That *this was a Thing ſubject to ſo great Uncertainty, that God could not hang our Salvation on ſuch Niceties?* Suppoſe, for Proof of this, he ſhould appeal to the Scriptures; and aſk, where any mention is made of aſcertaining the Truth of all the Copies? Would not this be a Way of Arguing very Theological? The Application is very eaſy.

Your Lordſhip has not one Word to prove the uninterrupted Succeſſion of the Clergy a *Trifle* or *Dream*; but that it is ſubject to ſo great Uncertainty, and is never mentioned in the Scriptures. As to the Uncertainty of it, it is equally as uncertain, as whether the Scriptures be *Genuine*. There is juſt the ſame ſufficient Hiſtorical Evidence for the Certainty of one as the other. As to its not being mentioned in the Scripture, the Doctrine upon which it is founded, plainly made it unneceſſary to mention it. Is it needful for the Scriptures to tell us, that if we take our Bible from any falſe Copy, that it is not the Word of God? Why then need they tell us, that if we are ordained by uſurping falſe Pretenders to Ordination, nor deriving their Authority to that end from the Apoſtles, that we are no Prieſts? Does not the thing itſelf ſpeak as plain in one Caſe as in the other? The Scriptures are only of uſe to us, as they are the Word of God: We cannot have this Word of God, which was written ſo many Years ago, unleſs we receive it from authentick Copies and Manuſcripts.

The Clergy have their Commiſſion from the Holy Ghoſt: The Power of conferring this Commiſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, was left with the Apoſtles: Therefore the preſent Clergy cannot have the ſame Commiſſion, or Call, but from an Order of Men, who have ſucceſſively conveyed this Power from the Apoſtles to the preſent time. So that, my Lord,

I shall beg leave to lay it down, as a plain, undeniable, Christian Truth, that the Order of the Clergy is an Order of as necessary Obligation, as the Sacraments; and as unalterable as the Holy Scriptures; the same Holy Ghost being as truly the Author and Founder of the Priesthood, as the Institutor of the Sacraments, or the Inspirer of those Divine Oracles. And when your Lordship shall offer any fresh Arguments to prove that no particular sort of Clergy is necessary; that the Benedictions and Administrations of the present Clergy of our most excellent Church, are trifling Niceties; if I cannot shew that the same Arguments will conclude against the Authority of the Sacraments and the Scriptures, I faithfully promise your Lordship to become a Convert to your Doctrine.

What your Lordship charges upon your Adversaries, as an absurd Doctrine, in pretending the Necessity of one regular, successive, and particular Order of the Clergy, is a true Christian Doctrine; and as certain from Scripture, as that we are to keep to the Institution of particular Sacraments; or not to alter those particular Scriptures, which now compose the Canon of the old and new Testament.

By authoritative Benediction, we do not mean any natural or intrinsick Authority of our own: But a Commission from God, to be effectual Administrators of his Ordinances, and to bless in his Name. Thus, a Person who is sent from God, to foretel things, of which he had before no Knowledge or Notion; or to denounce Judgments, which he has no natural Power to execute; may truly be said to be an *authoritative Prophet*; because he has the Authority of God for what he does. Thus, when the Bishop is said to confer Grace in Confirmation, this is properly an *authoritative Benediction*; because he is then as truly doing what God has commissioned him

him to do, as when a Prophet declares upon what Errand he is ſent.

It is in this Senſe, my Lord, that the People are ſaid to be *authoritatively* bleſſed by the regular Clergy; becauſe they are *God's Clergy*, and act by his Commiſſion; becauſe by their Hands the People receive the Graces and Benefits of God's Ordinances; which they have no more Reaſon to expect from other Miniſters of their own Election, or if the Word may be uſed in an abuſive Senſe, of their own *Conſecration*, than to receive Grace from Sacraments of their own Appointment. The Scriptures teach us, That the Holy Ghoſt has inſtituted an Order of Clergy: We ſay, a Prieſthood, ſo authorized, can no more be changed by us, than we can change the Scriptures, or make new Sacraments; becauſe they are all founded on the ſame Authority, without any Power of a Diſpenſation delegated to us in one Caſe more than another. If therefore we have a Mind to continue in the Covenant of Chriſt, and receive the Grace and Benefit of his Ordinances, we muſt receive them through ſuch Hands as he has authorized for that Purpoſe, to the end we may be qualified to partake of the Bleſſings of them. For as a *true* Prieſt cannot benefit us by adminiſtring a *falſe* Sacrament; ſo a *true* Sacrament is nothing, when it is adminiſtered by a *falſe uncommiſſioned Miniſter*. Beſides this Benediction which attends the Ordinances of God, when they are thus performed by authorized Hands, there is a Benediction of Prayer, which we may juſtly think very effectual, when pronounced or diſpenſed by the ſame Hands.

Thus when the Biſhop or Prieſt intercedes for the Congregation, or pronounces the Apoſtolical Benediction upon them, we do not conſider this barely as an Act of Charity and Humanity, of one Chriſtian praying for another; but as the Work of a Perſon who is commiſſioned by God to *bleſs in his Name*,

Name, and be effectually miniſterial in the Conveyance of his Graces; or as the Prayer of one who is left with us in Chriſt's ſtead, to carry on his great Deſign of ſaving us; and whoſe Benedictions are ever ratified in Heaven, but when we render our ſelves in one Reſpect or other incapable of them.

Now, my Lord, they are theſe *ſacerdotal Prayers*, theſe authorized Sacraments, theſe commiſſioned Paſtors, whom the Holy Ghoſt has made Overſeers of the Flock of Chriſt, that your Lordſhip encourages the Laity to deſpiſe. You bid them *contemn the vain Words of Validity or Invalidity of God's Ordinances*; to *heed no particular ſort of Clergy, or the pretended Neceſſity of their Adminiſtrations.*

Your Lordſhip ſets up in this Controverſy for an Advocate for the Laity, againſt the *arrogant Pretences*, and *falſe Claims* of the Clergy. My Lord, we are no more contending for our ſelves in this Doctrine, than when we inſiſt upon any Article in the Creed. Neither is it any more our particular Cauſe, when we aſſert our Miſſion, than when we aſſert the Neceſſity of the Sacraments.

Who is to receive the Benefit of that Commiſſion which we aſſert, but they? Who is to ſuffer, if we pretend a falſe one, but ourſelves? Sad Injury, indeed, offered to the Laity! that we ſhould affect to be thought Miniſters of God for their Sakes! If we really are ſo, they are to receive the Benefit; if not, we are to bear the Puniſhment.

But your Lordſhip comes too late in this glorious Undertaking, to receive the Reputation of it; the Work has been already, in the Opinion of moſt People, better done to your Lordſhip's Hands. The famous Author of *The Rights of the Chriſtian Church*, has carried this *Chriſtian Liberty* to as great Heights as your Lordſhip. And though you have not one Notion, I can recollect, that has given Offence to the World, but what ſeems taken from that pernicious

nicious Book; yet your Lordſhip is not ſo juſt as ever once to cite or mention the Author; who, if your Lordſhip's Doctrine be true, deſerves to have a Statue erected to his Honour, and receive every Mark of Eſteem which is due to the greateſt Reformer of Religion.

Did not mine own Eyes aſſure me that he has caſt no Contempt upon the Church, no Reproach upon the Evangelical Inſtitutions, or the Sacred Function, but what has been ſeconded by your Lordſhip, I would never have placed your Lordſhip in the ſame View with ſo ſcandalous a Declaimer againſt the Ordinances of Chriſt. Whether I am right, or not, in this Charge, I freely leave to the Judgment of thoſe to determine, who are acquainted with both your Works. Yet this Author, my Lord, has been treated by the greateſt and beſt Part of the Nation, as a Free-thinking Infidel. But for what, my Lord? Not that he has declared againſt the Scriptures; not that he has rejected Revelation; (we are not, bleſſed be God, ſtill ſo far corrupted with the Principles of Infidelity) but becauſe he has reproached every particular Church, as ſuch, and denied all Obligation to Communion; becauſe he has expoſed Benedictions, Abſolutions, and Excommunications; denied the Divine Right of the Clergy, and ridiculed the pretended Sacredneſs and Neceſſity of their Adminiſtrations, as mere Niceties and Trifles, though commonly in more diſtant, I was going to ſay more decent Ways: In a Word, becauſe he made all Churches, all Prieſts, all Sacraments, however adminiſtred, equally valid, and denied any particular Method neceſſary to Salvation. Yet after all this profane Declamation, he allows, my Lord, that *Religious Offices may be appropriated to particular Men, called* Clergy, *for Order ſake only; and not on the Account of any peculiar Spiritual Advantages, Powers, or Privi-*

Privileges, which those who are set apart for them, have from Heaven. *

Agreeable to this, your Lordship owns, that you are not against the *Order*, or *Decency*, or *Subordination belonging to Christian Societies.* †

But, pray, my Lord, do you mean any more by this, than the abovementioned Author? Is it for any Thing, but the Sake of a little external *Order* or *Conveniency?* Is there any Christian Law that obliges to observe this kind of Order? Is there any real essential Difference between Persons ranked into this Order? Is it a Sin for any Body, especially the Civil Magistrate, to leave this Order, and make what other Orders he prefers to it? This your Lordship cannot resolve in the Affirmative; for then you must allow, that some Communions are safer than others, and that some Clergy have more Authority than others.

Will your Lordship say, that no *particular* Order can be necessary; yet some Order necessary, which may be different in different Communions? This cannot hold good upon your Lordship's Principles; for since Christ has left no Law about any Order, no Members of any particular Communion need submit to that Order; since it is confessed by your Lordship, That in Religion no Laws, but those of Christ, are of any Obligation. So that though you do not disclaim all external Order and Decency your self, yet you have taught other People to do it if they please, and as much as they please.

Suppose, my Lord, some Layman, upon a Pretence of your Lordship's Absence, or any other, should go into the Diocese of *Bangor*, and there pretend to ordain Clergymen; could your Lordship quote one Text of Scripture against him? Could you alledge any Law of Christ, or his Apostles, that he had broken? Could you prove him guilty of any Sin?

* Page 131. † *Answer to Dr.* Snape, p. 48.

Sin? No, my Lord, you would not do that; becauſe this would be acknowledging ſuch a Thing as a *Sinful Ordination*; and if there be Sinful Ordinations, then there muſt be ſome Law concerning Ordinations: For *Sin is the Tranſgreſſion of the Law:* And if there be a Law concerning Ordinations, then we muſt keep to the Clergy *lawfully* ordained; and muſt confeſs, after all your Lordſhip has ſaid, or can ſay, that ſtill ſome Communions are ſafer than others.

If you ſhould reprove ſuch a one, as an *Engliſhman*, for acting in Oppoſition to the *Engliſh* Laws of *Decency* and *Order*; he would anſwer, That he has nothing to do with ſuch *Trifles*; That Chriſt was ſole Lawgiver in his Kingdom; That he was content to have his Kingdom as *orderly* and *decent* as Chriſt had left it; and ſince he had inſtituted no Laws in that Matter, it was preſuming, for others to take upon them to add any Thing by way of *Order* or *Decency*, by Laws of their own: That as he had as much Authority from Chriſt to ordain Clergy, as your Lordſhip, he would not depart from his Chriſtian Liberty.

If he ſhould remonſtrate to your Lordſhip in theſe, or Words to the like Effect, he would only reduce your Lordſhip's own Doctrine to Practice. This, my Lord, is part of that Confuſion the learned Dr. *Snape* has charged you with being the Author of, in the Church of God: And all Perſons, my Lord, whom you have taught not to regard any particular Sort of Clergy, muſt know (if they have the common Senſe to which you appeal) that then no Clergy are at all neceſſary; and that it is as lawful for any Man to be his own Prieſt, as to ſollicit his own Cauſe. For to ſay that no particular Sort of Clergy are neceſſary, and yet that in general the Clergy are neceſſary, is the ſame as to ſay, that Truth is neceſſary to be believed; yet the Belief of no particular Truth is neceſſary.

The

The next Thing to be conſidered, my Lord, is your Doctrine concerning Abſolutions. You begin thus: *The ſame you will find a ſufficient Reply to their preſumptuous Claim to an authoritative Abſolution. An infallible Abſolution cannot belong to fallible Men. But no Abſolution can be authoritative, which is not infallible. Therefore no authoritative Abſolution can belong to any Man living.* *

I muſt obſerve here, your Lordſhip does not reject this *Abſolution*, becauſe the Claim of it is not founded in Scripture; but by an Argument drawn from the Nature of the Thing: Becauſe you imagine ſuch Abſolution requires Infallibility for the Execution of it; therefore it cannot belong to Men. Should this be true, it would prove, that if our Saviour had really ſo intended, he could not have given this Power to his Miniſters. But, my Lord, who can ſee any Repugnancy in the Reaſon of the Thing it ſelf? Is it not as eaſy to conceive, that our Lord ſhould confer his Grace of Pardon by the Hands of his Miniſters, as by Means of the Sacraments? And may not ſuch Abſolution be juſtly called *authoritative*, the Power of which is granted, and executed by his Authority?

Is it impoſſible for Men to have this Authority from God, becauſe they may miſtake in the Exerciſe of it? This Argument proves too much, and makes as ſhort Work with every Inſtitution of Chriſtianity, as with the Power of Abſolution.

For if it is impoſſible that Men ſhould have Authority from God to abſolve in his Name, becauſe they are not infallible; this makes them equally incapable of being entruſted with any other Means of Grace; and conſequently ſuppooſes the whole Prieſt's Office to imply a direct Impoſſibility in the very Notion of it.

* *Preſervative*, p 92.

Your

Your Lordſhip's Argument is this: Chriſtians have their Sins pardoned upon certain Conditions; but fallible Men cannot certainly know theſe Conditions: Therefore fallible Men cannot have Authority to *abſolve*.

From hence I take Occaſion to argue thus: Perſons are to be admitted to the Sacraments on certain Conditions; but fallible Men cannot tell whether they come qualified to receive them according to theſe Conditions: Therefore fallible Men cannot have Authority to adminiſter the Sacraments.

2*dly*, This Argument ſubverts all Authority of the Chriſtian Religion itſelf, and the Reaſon of every inſtituted Means of Grace. For if nothing can be authoritative, but what a Man is infallibly aſſured of, then the Chriſtian Religion cannot be an authoritative Method of Salvation; ſince a Man, by being a Chriſtian, does not become infallibly certain of his Salvation: Nor does Grace infallibly attend the Participation of the Sacraments. So that though your Lordſhip has formed this Argument only againſt this abſolving Power, yet it has as much Force againſt the Sacraments, and the Chriſtian Religion it ſelf. For if it be abſurd to ſuppoſe that the Prieſt ſhould abſolve any one, becauſe he cannot be certain that he deſerves Abſolution; does it not imply the ſame Abſurdity, to ſuppoſe that he ſhould have the Power of adminiſtring the Sacraments, when he cannot be *infallibly certain* that thoſe who receive them are duly qualified? If a Poſſibility of Error deſtroys the Power in one Caſe, it as certainly deſtroys it in the other. Again, if Abſolution cannot be authoritative, unleſs it be infallible; then it is plain that the Chriſtian Religion is not an authoritative Means of Salvation; becauſe all Chriſtians are not infallibly ſaved: Nor can the Sacraments be authoritative Means of Grace, becauſe all who partake of them do not infallibly obtain Grace.

Your

Your Lordſhip proceeds with your Laity by way of Expoſtulation: *If they amuſe you with that Power which Chriſt left with his Apoſtles, Whoſe ſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe ſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained unto them:* *

But why *amuſe*, my Lord? Are the Texts of Holy Scripture to be treated only as Matter of *Amuſement?* Or does your Lordſhip know of any Age in the Church when the very ſame Doctrine which we now teach, has not been taught from the ſame Texts?

Do you know any Succeſſors of the Apoſtles that thought the Power there ſpecified did not belong to them? But, however, your Lordſhip has taught your Laity to believe what we argue from this Text, all Amuſement; and told them, *They may ſecurely anſwer, that it is impoſſible for them to depend upon this Right as any thing certain, till they can prove to you that every thing ſpoken to the Apoſtles, belongs to Miniſters in all Ages.* † The Security of this Anſwer, my Lord, is founded upon this falſe Preſumption, *viz.* That the Clergy can claim no Right to the Exerciſe of any Part of their Office, *as Succeſſors of the Apoſtles*, till they can prove that every Thing that was ſpoken to the Apoſtles, belongs to them.

This Propoſition muſt be true, or elſe there is no Force or *Security* in the Objection you here bring for the Inſtruction of the Laity. If it is well founded, then the Clergy cannot poſſibly prove they have any more Right to the Exerciſe of any Part of their Office than the Laity. Do they pretend to ordain, confirm, to admit or exclude Men from the Sacraments? By what Authority is all this done? Is it not becauſe the Apoſtles, whoſe Succeſſors they are, did the ſame Things? But then, ſay your Lordſhip's well-inſtructed Laity, this is nothing to the Purpoſe: Prove your ſelves Apoſtles; prove that every Thing ſaid

* Page 93. † Page 94.

ſaid to the Apoſtles belongs to you; and then it will be allowed, that you may exerciſe theſe Powers, becauſe they exerciſed them: But as this is impoſſible to be done, ſo it is impoſſible for you to prove that you have any Powers or Authorities, becauſe they had them.

And now, my Lord, if the Caſe be thus, what Apology ſhall we make for Chriſtianity, as it has been practiſed in all Ages? How ſhall we excuſe the Noble Army of Martyrs, Saints, and Confeſſors, who have boldly aſſerted the Right to ſo many Apoſtolical Powers? Could any Men in theſe Ages pretend, *that every thing that was ſpoken to the Apoſtles, belonged to themſelves?* Falſe, then, was their Claim, and preſumptuous their Authority, who ſhould pretend any Apoſtolical Powers, becauſe the Apoſtles had them; when they could not prove, *that every thing that was ſpoken to the Apoſtles, belonged to them.*

Farther; To prove that the above-mentioned Text does not confer the Power of Abſolution in the Clergy, you reaſon thus: *Whatever contradicts the Natural Notions of God, and the Deſign and Tenor of the Goſpel, cannot be the true Meaning of any Paſſage in the Goſpel: But to make the Abſolution of weak and fallible Men ſo neceſſary, or ſo valid, that God will not pardon without them; or that all are pardoned who have them pronounced over them, is to contradict thoſe Notions, as well as the plain Tenor of the Goſpel.* *

Be pleaſed, my Lord, to point out your Adverſary; name any one Church of *England* Man that ever taught this romantic Doctrine which you are confuting. Who ever taught ſuch a Neceſſity of Abſolutions, that God will pardon none without them? Who ever declared that all are pardoned who have them pronounced over them? We teach the *Neceſſity* and *Validity* of Sacraments; but do we ever declare that all are ſaved who receive them? Is there

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* Page 93.

no *Medium* between two Extremes? No such Thing, my Lord, as *Moderation!* Must every Thing be thus absolute and extravagant, or nothing at all?

In another Page we have more of this same Colouring: *But to claim a Right to stand in God's Stead, in such a Sense, that they can absolutely and certainly bless, or not bless, with their Voice alone: This is the highest Absurdity and Blasphemy, as it supposeth God to place a Set of Men above himself; and to put out of his own Hands the Disposal of his Blessings and Curses.* *

If your Lordship had employed all this Oratory against worshipping the Sun or Moon, it had just affected your Adversaries as much as this. For who ever taught that any Set of Men could *absolutely* bless, or with-hold Blessing, independent of God? Who ever taught, that the Christian Religion, or Sacraments, or Absolution, saved People on course, or without proper Dispositions? Whoever claimed such an absolving Power, as to set himself above God, and to take from him the Disposal of his own Blessings and Curses? What has such extravagant Descriptions, such romantic Characters of Absolution, to do with that Power the Clergy justly claim? Cannot there be a Necessity in some Cases of receiving Absolution from their Hands, except they set themselves above God? Is God robbed of the Disposal of his Blessings, when, in Obedience to his own Commands, and in virtue of his own Authority, they admit some as Members of the Church, and exclude others from the Communion of it? Do they pretend to be Channels of Grace, or the Means of Pardon, by any Rights or Powers naturally inherent in them? Do they not in all these Things consider themselves as Instruments of God, that are made ministerial to the Edification of the Church, purely by his Will, and only so far as they act in Conformity to it? Now if it has pleased God to confer the Holy Ghost in

* Page 91.

in Ordination, Confirmation, *&c.* only by them, and to annex the Grace of Pardon to the Impoſition of their Hands, on returning Sinners; is it any *Blaſphemy* for them to claim and exert their Power? Is the Prerogative of God injured, becauſe his own Inſtitutions are obeyed? Cannot he diſpenſe his Graces by what Perſons, and on what Terms he pleaſes? Is he deprived of the Diſpoſal of his Bleſſings, becauſe they are beſtowed on Perſons according to his Order, and in Obedience to his Authority? If I ſhould affirm, that Biſhops have the ſole Power to ordain and confirm, would this be robbing God of his Diſpoſal of thoſe Graces that attend ſuch Actions? Is it not rather allowing and ſubmitting to God's own Diſpoſal, when we keep cloſe to thoſe Methods of it which himſelf has preſcribed?

Pray, my Lord, conſider the Nature of Sacraments. Are not they neceſſary to Salvation? But is God therefore excluded from any Power of his own? Has he for that Reaſon, ſet Bread and Wine in the Euchariſt, or Water in Baptiſm, above Himſelf? Has he put the Salvation of Men out of his own Power, becauſe it depends on his own Inſtitutions? Is the Salvation of Chriſtians leſs his own Act and Deed, or leſs the Effect of his own Mercy, becauſe theſe Sacraments in great meaſure contribute to effect it? Why then, my Lord, muſt that Impoſition of Hands that is attended with his Grace and Pardon, and which has no Pretence to ſuch Grace, but in Obedience to his Order, and in virtue of his Promiſe, be thus deſtructive of his Prerogative? Where is there any Diminution of his Honour or Authority, if ſuch Actions of the Clergy are made neceſſary to the Salvation of Souls in ſome Circumſtances, as their waſhing in Water, or their receiving Bread and Wine? Cannot God inſtitute Means of Grace, but thoſe Means muſt needs be above himſelf? They owe all their Power and Efficacy to his Inſtitution,

and can operate no farther than the Ends for which he inſtituted them. How then is he dethroned for being thus obeyed?

My Lord, you take no notice of Scripture; but in a new Way of your own, contend againſt this Power, from the Nature of the Thing: Yet I muſt beg leave to ſay, this Power ſtands upon as ſure a Bottom, and is as conſiſtent with the Goodneſs and Majeſty of God, as the Sacraments. If the annexing Grace to Sacraments, and making them neceſſary Means of Salvation, be a reaſonable Inſtitution of God; ſo is his annexing Pardon to the Impoſition of Hands by the Clergy on returning Sinners. The Grace or Bleſſing received in either Caſe, is of his own giving, and in a Method of his own preſcribing. And how this ſhould be any Injury to God's Honour, or Affront to his Majeſty, cannot eaſily be accounted for.

The Clergy juſtly claim a Power of reconciling Men to God, from expreſs Terms of Scripture; and of delivering his Pardons to penitent Sinners. Your Lordſhip diſowns this Claim, as making fallible Men the abſolute Diſpenſers of God's Bleſſings, and putting it in their Power to damn and ſave as they pleaſe. But, my Lord, nothing of this Extravagance is included in it. They are only entruſted with a *conditional* Power; which they are to exerciſe according to the Rules God has given; and it only obtains its Effect when it is ſo exerciſed. Every inſtituted Means of Grace is *conditional*; and is only then effectual, when it is attended with ſuch Circumſtances, as are required by God. If the Clergy, through Weakneſs, Paſſion or Prejudice, exclude Perſons from the Church of God, they injure only themſelves. But, my Lord, are theſe Powers nothing, becauſe they may be exerciſed in vain? Have the Clergy no right at all to them, becauſe they are not *abſolutely infallible* in the Exerciſe of them?

Can

Can you prove, my Lord, that they are not neceſſary, becauſe they have not always the ſame Effect? May not that be neceſſary to Salvation, which is only effectual on *certain Conditions?* Is not the Chriſtian Religion neceſſary to Salvation, though all Chriſtians are not ſaved? Are not the Sacraments neceſſary Means of Grace, though the Means of Grace obtained thereby is only conditional? Is every one neceſſarily improved in Grace, who receives the Sacrament? Or is it leſs neceſſary, becauſe the ſalutary Effects of it are not more univerſal? Why then muſt the Impoſition of Hands be leſs neceſſary, becauſe the Grace of it is conditional, and only obtained in due and proper Circumſtances? Is Abſolution nothing, becauſe if withheld wrongfully, it injures not the Perſon who is denied it; and if given without due Diſpoſitions in the Penitent, it avails nothing? Is not this equally true of the Sacraments, if they are denied wrongfully, or adminiſtred to unprepared Receivers? But do they therefore ceaſe to be ſtanding and neceſſary Means of Grace?

The Argument therefore againſt this Power, drawn from the Ignorance or Paſſions of the Clergy, whereby they may miſtake or pervert the Application of it, can be of no Force; ſince it is as conditional as any other Chriſtian Inſtitution. The Salvation of no Man can be endangered by the Ignorance or Paſſions of any Clergymen in the Uſe of this Power: If they err in the Exerciſe of it, the Conſequences of their Error only affect themſelves. The Adminiſtration of the Sacraments is certainly entruſted to them: But will any one ſay, that the Sacraments are not neceſſary to Salvation; becauſe they may, through Ignorance or Paſſion, make an ill Uſe of this Truſt?

There is nothing in this Doctrine to gratify the Pride of Clergymen, or encourage them to lord it over the Flock of Chriſt. If you could ſuppoſe an

Atheiſt or a Deiſt in Orders; he might be arrogant and domineer in the Exerciſe of his Powers: But who, that has the leaſt Senſe of Religion, can think it matter of Triumph, that he can deny the Sacraments, or refuſe his Benediction to any of his Flock? Can he injure or offend the leaſt of theſe; and will not God take Account? Or, if they fall through his Offence, will not their Blood be required at his Hands?

Neither is there any thing in it that can enſlave the Laity to the Clergy; or make their Salvation depend upon their arbitrary Will. Does any one think his Salvation in danger, becauſe the Sacraments (the neceſſary means of it) are only to be adminiſtered by the Clergy? Why then muſt the Salvation of *Penitents* be endangered, or made dependent on the ſole Pleaſure of the Clergy; becauſe they alone can reconcile them to the Favour of God? If Perſons are unjuſtly denied the Sacraments, they may humbly hope, that God will not lay the Want of them to their Charge. And if they are unjuſtly kept out of the Church, and denied Admittance, they have no Reaſon to fear but God will notwithſtanding accept them, provided they be in other reſpects proper Objects of his Favour.

But to proceed, your Lordſhip ſays, *The Apoſtles might poſſibly underſtand the Power of remitting and retaining Sins, to be that Power of laying their Hands upon the Sick.*

Is this *poſſible*, my Lord? Then it is *poſſible*, the Apoſtles might think, that in the Power here intended to be given them, *nothing at all* was intended to be given them. For the Power of healing the Sick, was already conferred upon them. Therefore, if no more was intended to be given them in this Text, it cannot be interpreted, as having entitled them properly to any Power at all.

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2. The Power mentioned here, was ſomething that Jeſus promiſed he would give them hereafter: Which plainly ſuppoſes they had it not then: But they then had the Power of *Healing*; therefore ſomething elſe muſt be intended here.

3. The Power of the *Keys* has always been looked upon as the higheſt in the Apoſtolical Order. But if it related only to the Power of Healing, it could not be ſo: For the *Seventy*, who were inferior to the Apoſtles, had this Power.

4. The very Manner of Expreſſion in this Place, proves, that the Power here intended to be given, could not relate to *Healing the Sick*, or to any thing of that Nature; but to ſome *ſpiritual Power*, whoſe Effects ſhould not be *viſible*; but be made good by virtue of God's Promiſe. Thus, *whomſoever ye ſhall* heal *on Earth*, I will heal *in Heaven*, borders too near upon an Abſurdity. There is no Occaſion to promiſe to make *good* ſuch Actions as are good already, and have antecedently produced their Effects. Perſons who were reſtored to Health, to their Sight, or the Uſe of their Limbs, did not want to be aſſured, that the Apoſtles, by whom they were reſtored, had the Power to that End; the Exerciſe of which Power proved and confirmed itſelf. There was no need therefore of a Divine Aſſurance, that a Perſon that was healed, was actually healed in vertue of it. But when we conſider this Promiſe, as relating to a *Power* whoſe *Effects* are not *viſible*, as the *Pardon of Sins*, the Terms whereby it is expreſt, are moſt proper; and it is very reaſonable to ſuppoſe God promiſing, that the ſpiritual Powers exerciſed by his Miniſters on Earth, though they do not here produce their *viſible Effects*, ſhall yet be made good and effectual by him in *Heaven*.

Theſe Reaſons, my Lord, I ſhould think, are ſufficient to convince any one, that the Apoſtles

could not *poſſibly* underſtand theſe Words in the Senſe of your Lordſhip.

Let us now conſider the Commiſſion given to *Peter*. Our Saviour ſaid to him, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it: And I will grant unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.*

Now, my Lord, how ſhould it enter into the Thoughts of *Peter*, that nothing was here intended, or promiſed by our Saviour, but a Power of Healing; which he not only had before, but alſo many other Diſciples, who were not Apoſtles? *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; that is, according to your Lordſhip, *I will give thee Power to heal the Sick*. Can any thing be more contrary to the plain obvious Senſe of the Words? Can any one be ſaid to have the *Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven, becauſe he may be the Inſtrument of reſtoring People to Health? Are Perſons Members of Chriſt's Kingdom, with any regard to Health? How then can he have any Power in that Kingdom; or be ſaid to have the *Keys* of it, who is only empowered to cure Diſtempers? Could any one be ſaid to have the *Keys* of a temporal Kingdom, who had no temporal Power given him in that Kingdom? Muſt not he therefore who has the *Keys* of a ſpiritual Kingdom, have ſome ſpiritual Power in that Kingdom?

Chriſt has told us, that his Kingdom is not of this World. Your Lordſhip has told us, that it is ſo foreign to every thing of this World, that no *worldly Terrors* or Allurements, no Pains or Pleaſures of the Body, can have any thing to do with it. Yet here your Lordſhip teaches us, that he may have the *Keys* of this ſpiritual Kingdom, who has only a Power over Diſeaſes. My Lord, are not Sickneſs

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and Health, Sight and Limbs, Things of this World? Have they not ſome relation to bodily Pleaſures and Pains? How then can a Power about Things wholly confined to this World, be a Power in a Kingdom that is not of this World? The Force of the Argument lies here: Our Saviour has aſſured us, that his Kingdom is not of this World: Your Lordſhip takes it to be of ſo ſpiritual a Nature, that it ought not, nay, that it cannot be encouraged or eſtabliſhed by any worldly Powers. *Our Saviour gives to his Apoſtles the Keys of this Kingdom:* Yet you have ſo far forgotten your own Doctrine, and the Spirituality of this Kingdom, that you tell us, he here gave them a temporal Power of Diſeaſes; though he ſays, they were the *Keys of his Kingdom* which he gave them. Suppoſe any Succeſſor of the Apoſtles ſhould from this Text pretend to the Power of the Sword, to make People Members of this Kingdom: Muſt not the Anſwer be, that he miſtakes the Power, by not conſidering, that they are only the *Keys* of a *ſpiritual*, not of a temporal Kingdom, which were here delivered to the Apoſtles.

I humbly preſume, my Lord, that this would be as good an Anſwer to your Lordſhip's Doctrine, as to theirs who claim the Right of the Sword, till it can be ſhewn that *Health* and *Sickneſs*, *Sight* and *Limbs*, do not as truly relate to the Things of this World as the Power of the Sword.

If this Power of the Keys muſt be underſtood, only as a Power of inflicting or curing Diſeaſes; then the Words, in the proper Conſtruction of them, muſt run thus: *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church*, i. e. a peculiar Society of healthful People, *and the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it*, i. e. they ſhall always be in a State of Health. *I will give unto thee the Keys of this Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. thou ſhalt have the Power of inflicting and curing Diſtempers; *and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind*

bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven, i. e. on whomſoever thou ſhalt inflict the Leproſy on Earth, he ſhall be a Leper in Heaven; *and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven*, i. e. whomſoever thou ſhalt cure of that Diſeaſe on Earth, ſhall be perfectly cured of it in Heaven.

This, without putting any Force upon the Words, is your Lordſhip's own Interpretation; which expoſes the Honour and Authority of Scriptures as much as the greateſt Enemy to them can wiſh. If our Saviour could mean by theſe Words, only a *Power* of *healing Diſtempers*; or if the Apoſtles underſtood them in that Senſe, we may as well believe that when he ſaid, *His Kingdom was not of this World*, that he meant, it was of this World; and that the Apoſtles ſo underſtood him too.

But, however, for the Benefit and Edification of the Laity, your Lordſhip has another Interpretation for them: You ſay, *if they* (the Apoſtles) *did apply this Power of remitting Sins to the certain Abſolution of particular Perſons, it is plain, they could do it upon no other Bottom but this; that God's Will and good Pleaſure about ſuch particular Perſons was infallibly communicated to them.*

Pray, my Lord, how, or where is this ſo plain? Is it plain that they never baptized Perſons till God had *infallibly communicated his good Pleaſure to them about ſuch particular Perſons?* Baptiſm is an Inſtitution equally ſacred with this other, and puts the Perſon baptized in the ſame State of Grace *that Abſolution* does the Penitent. Baptiſm is deſigned for the Remiſſion of Sin. It is an Ordinance to which Abſolution is conſequent; but I ſuppoſe Perſons may be baptized without ſuch *infallible Communication* promiſed, as your Lordſhip contends for. If therefore it be not neceſſary for the Exerciſe of Abſolution by Baptiſm, why muſt it be neceſſary for Abſolution by the Impoſition of Hands?

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Can Paſtors without Infallibility baptize Heathens, and abſolve, or be the Inſtruments of abſolving them thereby from their Sins? Are they not as able to abſolve Chriſtian Penitents, or reſtore thoſe who have apoſtatized? If human Knowledge, and the common Rules of the Church, be ſufficient to direct the Prieſt to whom he ought to adminiſter the Sacraments; they are alſo ſufficient for the Exerciſe of this other Part of the ſacerdotal Office.

But your Lordſhip proceeds thus: *Not that they* themſelves *abſolved any.*

No, my Lord, no more than Water in Baptiſm of *it ſelf* purifies the Soul from Sin. This baptiſmal Water is, notwithſtanding, neceſſary for the Remiſſion of our Sins.

Again, you ſay, *Not that God was obliged to bind and looſe the Guilt of Men according to their Declarations, conſidered as their own Deciſions, and their own Determinations.* No, my Lord; who ever thought ſo? God is not obliged to confer Grace by the *baptiſmal Water*, conſidered only as *Water*; but he is, conſidered as *his own Inſtitution* for that End and Purpoſe. So if theſe Declarations are conſidered only as *the Declarations of Men*, God is not obliged by them: But when they are conſidered as the Declarations of *Men* whom he has eſpecially authorized to make *ſuch* Declarations in his Name, then they are as effectual with God, as any other of his Inſtitutions whatever.

I proceed now to a Paragraph that bears as hard upon our Saviour, as ſome others have done upon his Apoſtles and their Succeſſors; where your Lordſhip deſigns to prove, that though Chriſt claimed a Power of remitting Sins himſelf, or in his own Perſon, yet that he really had no ſuch Power.

You go on in theſe Words: *If we look back upon our Saviour himſelf, we ſhall find, that when he declares that the Son of Man had Power upon Earth to forgive Sins, even he himſelf either meant by it the Power of*

of a miraculous releasing Man from his Affliction; or if it related to another more spiritual Sense of the Words, the Power of declaring, that the Man's Sins were forgiven by God. *

The Words of our Saviour, which we are to look back upon, are these: *Whether it is easier to say, thy Sins are forgiven thee; or to say, arise, take up thy Bed and walk? But that ye may know, the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins;* (Mark ii. 9, 10.) As if he had said, "Is not the same Divine Au-"rity and Power required? Is it not a Work as "peculiar to God, to perform miraculous Cures, "as to forgive Sins? The Reason therefore why I "now chuse to declare my Authority, rather by "saying, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, than by saying, "*Arise and walk*, was purely to teach you this "Truth, that the Power of the Son of Man is "not confined to Bodily Cures; but that he has "Power on Earth to forgive Sins."

This, my Lord, is the first obvious Sense of the Words; and therefore I take it to be the true Sense. But your Lordship can look back upon them, till you find that Christ has not this Power, though he claims it expressly; but that he only intends a Power of doing *something or other*, which no more imports a Power of forgiving Sins, than of remitting any temporal Debt or Penalty.

If our blessed Saviour had intended to teach the World that he was invested with this Power, I would gladly know how he must have expressed himself, to have satisfied your Lordship that he really had it? He must have told you, that he had not this Power, and then possibly your Lordship would have taught us, that he had this Power. For no one can discover any Reason why you should deny it him, but because he has in express Words claimed and asserted it. I hope your Lordship has not so low an Opinion of

* *Preservative*, p. 94.

of our Saviour's Perſon, as to think it unreaſonable in the Nature of the Thing, that he ſhould have this Power. Where does it contradict any Principle of Reaſon, to ſay, that a *King* ſhould be able to pardon his Subjects? Since there is no Abſurdity then in the Thing it ſelf, and it is ſo expreſsly aſſerted in Scripture; it is juſt Matter of Surprize, that your Lordſhip ſhould carry your Reader from a plain conſiſtent Senſe of the Words, to *either this or that*, *Something or other*, the Origin whereof is only to be ſought for in your Lordſhip's own Invention; rather than not exclude Chriſt from a Power which he declared he had, and declared he had it for this very Reaſon, *that we might know that he had it*. Our Saviour has told us that the Way to Heaven is *narrow*. Your Lordſhip might as reaſonably prove from hence, that he meant, it was *broad*, as that he did not mean he could forgive Sins, when he ſaid, *that ye may know*, *that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins*.

Your Lordſhip has rejected all *Church Authority*, and deſpiſed the pretended *Powers* of the Clergy, for this Reaſon; becauſe Chriſt is the *ſole King*, *ſole Lawgiver*, *and Judge in his Kingdom*. But, it ſeems, your Lordſhip, notwithſtanding, thinks it now Time to depoſe him: And this *ſole King* in *his own Kingdom*, muſt not be allowed to be capable of pardoning his own Subjects.

This Doctrine, my Lord, is delivered, I ſuppoſe, as your other Doctrines, out of a hearty Concern and *Chriſtian* Zeal for the Privileges of the Laity; and to ſhew that your Lordſhip is not only able to limit as you pleaſe the Authority of *temporal Kings*; but alſo to make Chriſt himſelf *ſole King*, and yet *no King*, in his Spiritual Kingdom. For, my Lord, the Kingdom of Chriſt is a Society founded in order to the Reconciliation of Sinners to God. If therefore Chriſt could not pardon Sins, to what End could

could he either erect, or how could he support his Kingdom, which is only, in the great and last Design of it, to consist of absolved Sinners? He that cannot forgive Sins in a Kingdom that is erected for the Remission of Sins, can no more be *sole King* in it, than he that has no *temporal Power*, can be *sole King* in a *temporal Kingdom*. Therefore your Lordship has been thus mighty serviceable to the Christian Laity, as to teach them that Christ is not only *sole King*, but *no King* in his Kingdom.

This is not the first Contradiction your Lordship has unhappily fallen into, in your Attempts upon *kingly Authority*. Nor is it the last which I shall presume to observe to the *common Sense* of your Laity.

Again, in this Account of our blessed Saviour, your Lordship has made no Difference between him and his Apostles, as to this *absolving Authority*. For you say, the *great Commission* given to them implied either a Power of releasing Men from their bodily Afflictions; or of declaring such to be pardoned, whom God had assured them that he had pardoned: And this *all* that you here allow to Christ himself.

Your Lordship's calling him so often *King*, and *sole King*, &c. in his Kingdom, and yet making him a *mere Creature* in it, is too like the Insult, and designed Sarcasm of the *Jews*, who, when they had nailed him to the Cross, writ over his Head, *This is the King of the Jews*.

But to proceed: Your Lordship proves, That our Saviour had not the Power of *forgiving Sins*; because *His Way of Expression was, Thy Sins are forgiven thee. This was plainly to acknowledge, and keep up that true Notion, that God alone forgiveth Sins.*

Let us therefore put this Argument in Form. Christ hath affirmed, that he had Power to forgive Sins: But his Way was to say, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee:* Therefore Christ had not Power to forgive Sins. *Q. E. D.*

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It is much your Lordſhip did not recommend this to your Laity, as another *invincible Demonſtration*. For by the Help of it, my Lord, they may prove that our Saviour could no more *heal Diſeaſes*, than *forgive Sins*. As thus; Chriſt indeed pretends to a Power of healing Diſeaſes; but his uſual Way of ſpeaking to the diſeaſed Perſon was, *thy Faith hath made thee whole*; therefore he had not the Power of *healing* Diſeaſes. The Argument has the ſame Force againſt one Power, as againſt the other. If he did not *forgive Sins*, becauſe he ſaid, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*; no more did he heal Diſeaſes, becauſe he ſaid, *Thy Faith hath made thee whole*.

I have a Claim of ſeveral Debts upon a Man; I forgive him them all, in theſe Words, *Thy Debts are remitted thee*. A philoſophical Wit ſtands by, and pretends to prove, that I had not the Power of remitting theſe Debts; becauſe I ſaid, *Thy Debts are remitted thee*. What can come up to, or equal ſuch *profound Philoſophy*, but the *Divinity* of one who teaches, our Saviour could not forgive Sins, becauſe he ſaid, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee?*

But your Lordſhip ſays, the Reaſon why our Saviour thus expreſſeth himſelf, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, "was plainly to keep up that true Notion, that "God alone forgiveth Sins." Therefore, my Lord, according to this Doctrine, our Saviour was obliged not to claim any Power that was *peculiar* or *appropriated* to God *alone*. For if this be an Argument, why he ſhould not *forgive Sins*, it is alſo an Argument that he ought not to claim any other Power, any more than this; which is proper to God, and only belongs to him. But, my Lord, if he did expreſs himſelf thus, that he might not lay Claim to any Thing that was peculiar to God, how came he in ſo many other Reſpects to lay Claim to ſuch Things as are as truly peculiar to God, as the Forgiveneſs of Sins? How came he in ſo many Inſtances

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to make himſelf equal to God? How came he to ſay, *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me? And that Men ſhould worſhip the Son, even as the Father?* That he was the Son of God, that he was the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Are not evangelical Faith, Worſhip, and Truſt, Duties that are ſolely due to God? Does he not as much invade the Sovereignty of God, who lays Claim to theſe Duties, as he that pretends *to forgive Sins?* Did not Chriſt alſo give his Diſciples *Power and Authority* over Devils and unclean Spirits, and Power to heal all manner of Diſeaſes?

Now if Chriſt did not aſſume a Power to *forgive Sins*, becauſe God alone could forgive Sins, it is alſo as unaccountable that he ſhould exerciſe other *Authorities* and Powers, which are as ſtrictly peculiar to God as that of forgiving Sins. As if a Perſon ſhould diſown that Chriſt is omniſcient, becauſe Omniſcience is an *Attribute* of God *alone*; and yet confeſs his Omnipotence, which is an Attribute equally *divine*.

But farther, my Lord: Did our Saviour thus deſignedly expreſs himſelf, leſt he ſhould be thought to aſſume any Power which was divine, then it is certain (according to this Opinion) that if he had aſſumed any ſuch Power, or pretended to do what was peculiar to God, he had been the Occaſion of miſleading Men into Error. For if this be a plain Reaſon why he expreſſed himſelf ſo as to diſown this Power, it is plain that if he had owned it, he had been condemned by this Argument, as teaching falſe Doctrine.

Now if this would have been interpretatively falſe Doctrine in Chriſt, to take upon himſelf any Thing that was peculiar to God, the Apoſtles were guilty of propagating this falſe Doctrine. For there is ſcarce any known Attribute or Power of God, but they aſcribe it to our Saviour. They declare him eternal,

eternal, omnipotent, omniſcient, *&c.* Is it not a *true Notion*, that God alone can create, and is Governor of the Univerſe? Yet the Apoſtles expreſsly aſſure us of Chriſt, that *all Things were created by him*, and that *God hath put all Things in Subjection under his Feet.* 'Tis very ſurprizing that your Lordſhip ſhould exclude Chriſt from this Power of *forgiving* Sins, though he has expreſsly ſaid he could forgive Sins, becauſe ſuch a Power belongs only to God: When it appears through the whole Scripture, that there is ſcarce any divine Power which our Saviour himſelf has not claimed, nor any Attribute of God but what his Apoſtles have aſcribed to him. They have made him the *Creator*, the *Preſerver*, the *Governor* of the Univerſe, the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him; and yet your Lordſhip tells us, that he did not pretend to *forgive Sins*, becauſe that was a Power peculiar to God.

Here is then (to ſpeak in your Lordſhip's elegant Style) an *immoveable Reſting-place* for your Laity to ſet their Feet upon; here is an *Argument that will laſt them for ever:* They muſt believe that our Saviour did not forgive Sins, *becauſe* this was a Power that belonged to God, though the Scriptures aſſure us, that every other divine Power belonged to Chriſt. That is, they muſt believe, that though our Saviour claimed all divine Powers, yet not this divine Power, *becauſe* it is a divine Power. And, my Lord, if they have the common Senſe to believe this, they may alſo believe, that though our Saviour took human Nature upon him, yet that he had not a human Soul, becauſe it is proper to Man. They may believe, that any Perſon who has all kingly Power, cannot remit or reprieve a Malefactor, *becauſe* it is an Act of kingly Power to do it; or that a Biſhop cannot ſuſpend any Offender of his Dioceſe, becauſe it is an Act of epiſcopal Power to do it. All theſe Reaſons are as ſtrong and demonſtrative, as that Chriſt

who claimed all divine Powers, could not forgive Sins, *becauſe* it was a *divine Power*.

Laſtly, In this Argument your Lordſhip has plainly declared againſt the Divinity of Chriſt, and ranked him in the Order of Creatures. Your Lordſhip ſays, Chriſt did not forgive Sins, becauſe it is God *alone who can forgive Sins*; as plain an Argument as can be offered, that in your Lordſhip's Opinion Chriſt is not God: For if you believed him, in a true and proper Senſe, God, how could you exclude him from the Power of forgiving Sins, *becauſe* God alone can forgive Sins? It is inconſiſtent with Senſe and Reaſon to deny this Power to Chriſt becauſe it is a divine Power, but only becauſe you believe him not to be a divine Perſon. If Chriſt was God, then he might forgive Sins, though God alone can forgive Sins: But you ſay, Chriſt cannot forgive Sins, becauſe God *alone* can forgive Sins; therefore it is plain, that, according to your Lordſhip's Doctrine, Chriſt is not truly, or in a proper Senſe, God.

Here, my Lord, I deſire again to appeal to the *common Senſe* of your Laity; let them judge betwixt the Scriptures and your Lordſhip. The Scriptures plainly and frequently aſcribe all divine Attributes to Chriſt: They make him the Creator and Governor of the World; God over all, bleſſed for ever. Yet your Lordſhip makes him a Creature, and denies him *ſuch* a Power, becauſe it belongs only to God.

You your ſelf, my Lord, have allowed him to be abſolute Ruler over the Conſciences of Men; to be an arbitrary Diſpenſer of the Means of Salvation to Mankind; than which Powers, none can be more divine: And yet you hold, that he cannot forgive Sins, becauſe Pardon of Sin can only be the Effect of a divine Power.

Is it not equally a divine Power, (even according to your Lordſhip) to rule over the Conſciences of Men,

Men, to give Laws of Salvation, and to act in these Affairs with an uncontroulable Power, as *to forgive Sins?*

My Lord, let their common Sense here discover the Absurdity (for I must call it so) of your *new Scheme* of Government in Christ's Kingdom. Christ is *absolute* Lord of it, (according to your self) and can make or unmake Laws relating to it; can dispense or withhold Grace as he pleases in this spiritual Kingdom, all which Powers are purely divine; yet you say he cannot forgive Sins, though every express Power which you have allowed him over the Consciences of Men, be as truly a *divine Power* as that of *forgiving Sins*. Has not Christ a proper and personal Power to give Grace to his Subjects? Is he not Lord over their Consciences? And are not these Powers as truly appropriated to God? And has not your Lordship often taught them to be so, as that of *Forgiveness of Sins?* Is it not as much the Prerogative of God to have any natural intrinsic Power, to confer Grace, or any spiritual Benefit to the Souls of Men, as to forgive Sins? Has not your Lordship despised all the Administrations of the Clergy, because God's Graces can only come from himself, and are only to be received from his own Hands? The Conclusion therefore is this, either Christ has a personal intrinsic Power to confer Grace in his Kingdom, or he has not; if you say he has not, then you are chargeable with the Collusion of making him a King in a spiritual Kingdom, where you allow him no spiritual Power: If you say he has, then you fall into this Contradiction, that you allow him to have divine Powers, though he cannot have divine Powers; that is, you allow him to *give Grace*, though it is a divine Power, and not to *forgive Sins*, because it is a divine Power. My Lord, I wish your Laity (if there be any to whom you can render it intelligible) much Joy of such profound Divinity. Or

if there are others who are more taken with your Lordſhip's Sincerity, I deſire them not to paſs by this following remarkable Inſtance of it: Your Lordſhip has here as plainly declared, as Words can conſequentially declare any Thing, that you do not believe Chriſt to be God, yet profeſs your ſelf Biſhop of a Church, whoſe Liturgy in ſo many repeated Teſtimonies declares the contrary Doctrine, and which obliges you to expreſs your Aſſent and Conſent to ſuch Doctrine. My Lord, I here call upon your *Sincerity*; either declare Chriſt to be perfect God, and then ſhew why he could not *forgive Sins*; or deny him to be perfect God, and then ſhew how you can ſincerely declare your *Aſſent* and *Conſent* to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*.

This, my Lord, has an Appearance of Prevarication, which you cannot, I hope, charge upon any of your Adverſaries, who if they cannot think, that to be ſincere is the only Thing neceſſary to recommend Men to the Favour of God, yet may have as much, or poſſibly more Sincerity, than thoſe who do think ſo.

Before I take Leave of your Lordſhip, I muſt take Notice of a *Reſting-place*, a *ſtrong Retreat*, a *laſting Foundation*, i. e. *a Demonſtration in the ſtricteſt Senſe* of the Words, that all *Church-Communion* is unneceſſary.

Your Lordſhip ſets it out in theſe Words:

I am not now going to accuſe you of a Hereſy againſt Charity, but of a Hereſy againſt the Poſſibility and Nature of Things. As thus, *Mr.* Nelſon *(for Inſtance) thinks himſelf obliged in Conſcience to communicate with ſome of our Church. Upon this you declare he hath no Title to God's Mercy; and you and all the World allow, that if he communicates with you whilſt his Conſcience tells him it is a Sin, he is ſelf-condemned, and out of God's Favour. That Notion (viz.* the Neceſſity of Church-

Church-Communion) *therefore, which implies this great invincible Absurdity, cannot be true.*

Pray, my Lord, what is this wonderous Curiosity of a *Demonstration*, but the common Case of an *erroneous Conscience?* Did the strictest Contenders for Church-Communion ever teach, *that any Terms* are to be complied with against Conscience? But it is a strange Conclusion to infer from thence, that there is no Obligation to Communion, or that all Things are to be held indifferent, because they are not to be complied with against one's Conscience.

The Truths of the Christian Religion have the same Nature and Obligation, whatever our Opinions are of them, and those that are necessary to be believed, continue so, whether we can persuade our selves to believe them or not. I suppose your Lordship will not say, that the Articles of Faith and necessary Institutions of the Christian Religion, are no otherways necessary, than because we believe them to be so, that our Persuasion is the only Cause of the Necessity; but if their Necessity be not owing merely to our Belief of them, then it is certain that our Disbelief of them cannot make them less necessary. If the Ordinances of Christ, and the Articles of Faith are necessary, because Christ has made them so, that Necessity must continue the same, whether we believe and observe them or not.

So that, my Lord, we may still maintain the Necessity of Church-Communion, and the strict Observance of Christ's Ordinances, notwithstanding that People have different Persuasions in these Matters, presuming *that our Opinions* can no more alter the Nature or Necessity of Christ's Institutions, than we can believe *Error* into *Truth*, *Good* into *Evil*, or *Light* into *Darkness*. I shall think my self no *Heretic against the Nature of Things*, though I tell a *conscientious Socinian*, that the Divinity of Christ is necessary to be believed, or a *conscientious Jew*, that it is

neceſſary to be a Chriſtian in order to be ſaved. But if your Lordſhip's Demonſtration was accepted, we ſhould be obliged to give up the Neceſſity of every Doctrine and Inſtitution, to every Diſbeliever that pretended Conſcience. We muſt not tell any Party of People that they are in any Danger for being out of Communion with us, if they do but follow their own Perſuaſion.

Your Lordſhip's *invincible Demonſtration* proceeds thus:

We muſt not inſiſt upon the Neceſſity of joining with any particular Church, becauſe then conſcientious Perſons will be in Danger either Way; for if there be a Neceſſity of it, then there is a Danger if they do not join with it, and if they comply againſt their Conſciences, the Danger is the ſame.

What an inextricable Difficulty is here! How ſhall Divinity or Logic be able to relieve us!

Be pleaſed, my Lord, to accept of this Solution, in lieu of your Demonſtration.

I will ſuppoſe the Caſe of a *conſcientious Jew*; I tell him that Chriſtianity is the only covenanted Method of Salvation, and that he can have no Title to the Favour of God, till he profeſſes the Faith of Chriſt. What, replies he, would you direct me to do? If I embrace Chriſtianity againſt my Conſcience, I am out of God's Favour; and if I follow my Conſcience, and continue a *Jew*, I am alſo out of his Favour. The Anſwer is this, my Lord; The *Jew* is to obey his Conſcience, and to be left to the *uncovenanted, unpromiſed* Terms of God's *Mercy*, whilſt the conſcientious Chriſtian is entitled to the *expreſs and promiſed Favours of* God.

There is ſtill the ſame abſolute Neceſſity of believing in Chriſt, Chriſtianity is ſtill the only Method of Salvation; though the ſincere *Jew* cannot ſo perſuade himſelf; and we ought to declare it to all *Jews* and Unbelievers whatſoever, that they can only

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be saved by embracing Christianity: That a false Religion does not become a true one, nor a true one false, in Consequence of their Opinions; but that if they are so unhappy as to refuse the Covenant of Grace, they must be left to such *Mercy* as is without any Covenant. And now, my Lord, what is become of this mighty Demonstration? Does it prove that Christianity is not necessary, because the conscientious *Jew* may think it is not so? It may as well prove that the Moon is no larger than a Man's Head, because an honest ignorant Countryman may think it no larger.

Is there any Person of *common Sense*, who would think it a Demonstration that he is not obliged to go to Church, because a *conscientious* Dissenter will not? Could he think it less necessary to be a Christian, because a *sincere Jew* cannot embrace Christianity? Could he take it to be an indifferent Matter whether he believed the Divinity of Christ, because a *conscientious Socinian* cannot? Yet this is your Lordship's *invincible Demonstration*, that we ought not to insist upon the Necessity of Church-Communion, because a *conscientious Disbeliever* cannot comply with it.

A small Degree of *common Sense*, would teach a Man that true Religion, and the Terms of Salvation, must have the same obligatory Force, whether we reason rightly about them or not; and that they who believe and practise according to them, are in express Covenant with God, which entitles them to his Favour; whilst those who are sincerely erroneous, have nothing but the Sincerity of their Errors to plead, and are left to such Mercy of God, as is without any Promise. Here, my Lord, is nothing frightful or absurd in this Doctrine; they who are in the Church which Christ has founded, are upon Terms which entitle them to God's Favour; they who are out of it, fall to his Mercy.

But your Lordſhip is not content with the Terms of the Goſpel, or a Doctrine that only ſaves a particular Sort of People; this is a narrow View, not wide enough for your Notions of *Liberty*. Particular Religions, and particular Covenants, are *demonſtrated* to be abſurd, *becauſe* particular Perſons may diſbelieve, or not ſubmit to them.

Your Lordſhip muſt have Doctrines that will ſave all People alike, in every way that their Perſuaſion leads them to take: But, my Lord, there needs be no greater Demonſtration againſt your Lordſhip's Doctrine, than that it equally favours every Way of Worſhip; for an Argument which equally proves every Thing, has been generally thought to prove nothing; which happens to be the Caſe of your Lordſhip's *important Demonſtration*.

Your Lordſhip indeed only inſtances in a particular Perſon, Mr. *Nelſon*; but your *Demonſtration* is as ſerviceable to any other Perſon who has left any other Church whatever. The *conſcientious Quaker*, *Muggletonian*, *Independent*, or *Socinian*, &c. has the ſame Right to obey Conſcience, and blame any Church that aſſumes a Power of cenſuring him, as Mr. *Nelſon* had; and if he is cenſured by any Church, that Church is as guilty of the ſame *Hereſy againſt the Nature of Things*, as that Church which cenſured Mr. *Nelſon*, or any Church that ſhould pretend to cenſure any other Perſon whatever.

I am not at all ſurprized that your Lordſhip ſhould teach this Doctrine, but it is ſomething ſtrange that ſuch an Argument ſhould be obtruded upon the World as an unheard-of *Demonſtration*, and that in an *Appeal to common Senſe*. Suppoſe ſome Body or other in Defence of your Lordſhip, ſhould take upon him to demonſtrate to the World that there is no ſuch Thing as Colour, becauſe there are ſome People that cannot ſee; or Sounds, becauſe there are ſome who do not hear them; He would have found

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out the only *Demonſtration* in the World that could equal your Lordſhip's, and would have as much Reaſon to call thoſe *Heretics againſt the Nature of Things*, who ſhould diſbelieve him, and inſiſt upon the Reality of Sounds, as your Lordſhip has to call your Adverſaries ſo.

For is there no Neceſſity of Church-Communion, becauſe there are ſome who do not conceive it? Then there are no Sounds, becauſe there are ſome who do not hear them; for it is certainly as eaſy to believe away the *Truth* and *Reality*, as the *Neceſſity* of Things.

Some People have only taught us the *Innocency of Error*, and been content with ſetting forth its harmleſs Qualities; but your Lordſhip has been a more hearty Advocate, and given it a *Power* over every Truth and Inſtitution of Chriſtianity. If we have but an *erroneous Conſcience*, the whole Chriſtian Diſpenſation is cancelled; all the Truths and Doctrines in the Bible are *demonſtrated* to be unneſſary, if we do not believe them.

How unhappily have the ſeveral Parties of Chriſtians been diſputing for many Ages, who, if they could but have found out this *intelligible Demonſtration*, (from the Caſe of an erroneous Conſcience) would have ſeen the Abſurdity of pretending to neceſſary Doctrines, and inſiſting upon *Church-Communion*; but it muſt be acknowledged your Lordſhip's *new-invented Engine* for the Deſtruction of *Churches*; and it may be expected the *good Chriſtians of no Church* will return your Lordſhip their Thanks for it.

Your Lordſhip has thought it a mighty Objection to ſome Doctrines in the *Church* of *England*, that the Papiſts might make ſome Advantage of them: But yet your own Doctrine defends *all* Communions alike, and ſerve the *Jew* and *Socinian*, &c. as much as any other ſort of People. Though this ſufficiently appears, from what has been already ſaid, yet that

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it may be ſtill more obvious to the *common Senſe* of every one, I ſhall reduce theſe Doctrines to Practice, and ſuppoſe, for once, that your Lordſhip intends to convert a *Jew*, a *Quaker*, or *Socinian*.

Now in order to make a Convert of any of them, theſe Preliminary PROPOSITIONS are to be firſt laid down according to your Lordſhip's Doctrine.

Some *Propoſitions* for the Improvement of true Religion.

Propoſition I. That we are neither more or leſs in the Favour of God, for living in any particular Method or Way of Worſhip, but purely as we are ſincere. *Preſerv.* p. 90.

Prop. II. That no Church ought to unchurch another, or declare it out of God's Favour. *Preſerv.* p. 85.

Prop. III. That nothing loſes us the Favour of God, but a wicked Inſincerity. *Ibid.*

Prop. IV. That a conſcientious Perſon can be in no Danger for being out of any particular Church. *Preſerv.* p. 90.

Prop. V. That there is no ſuch Thing as any real Perfection or Excellency in any Religion, that can *juſtify* our adhering to it, but *that* all is founded in our perſonal Perſuaſion; which your Lordſhip thus proves: *When we left the Popiſh Doctrines, was it becauſe they were* actually *corrupt?* No; *The Reaſon was, becauſe we thought them ſo.* Therefore if we might leave the *Church of Rome*, not becauſe her Doctrines were corrupt, but becauſe we thought them ſo, then the ſame Reaſon will juſtify any one elſe, in leaving any Church, how true ſoever its Doctrines are; and conſequently there is no ſuch Thing as any *real* Perfection or Excellency in any Religion conſidered in it ſelf, but is *right* or *wrong* according to our Perſuaſions about it. *Preſerv.* p. 85.

Prop. VI. That Chriſt is *ſole* King and *Lawgiver* in his Kingdom, that no *Men* have any Power of Legi-

Legiſlation in it; that if we would be good Members of it, we muſt ſhew our ſelves Subjects of Chriſt alone, without any Regard to Man's Judgment.

Prop. VII. That as Chriſt's Kingdom is not of this World, ſo when worldly Encouragements are annexed to it, theſe are ſo many Diviſions againſt Chriſt and his own expreſs Word. *Serm.* p. 11.

Prop. VIII. That to pretend to know the Hearts and Sincerity of Men, is Nonſenſe and Abſurdity. *Serm.* p. 93.

Prop. IX. That God's Graces are only to be received immediately from himſelf. *Serm.* p. 89.

Theſe, my Lord, are your Lordſhip's own Propoſitions, expreſſed in your own Terms, without any Exaggeration.

And now, my Lord, begin as ſoon as you pleaſe, either with a *Quaker*, *Socinian*, or *Jew*; uſe any Argument whatſoever to convert them, and you ſhall have a ſufficient Anſwer from your own Propoſitions.

Will you tell the *Jew* that Criſtianity is neceſſary to Salvation? He will anſwer from *Prop.* I. *That we are neither more or leſs in the Favour of God, for living in any particular Method or Way of Worſhip, but purely as we are ſincere.*

Will your Lordſhip tell him, that the Truth of Chriſtianity is ſo well aſſerted, that there is no Excuſe left for Unbelievers? He will anſwer from Prop. V. *That all Religion is founded in perſonal Perſuaſion; that as your Lordſhip does not believe that Chriſt is come, becauſe he is actually come, but becauſe you think he is come; ſo he does not diſbelieve Chriſt becauſe he is not actually come, but becauſe he thinks he is not come.* So that here, my Lord, the *Jew* gives as good a Reaſon why he is not a Chriſtian, as your Lordſhip does why you are not a Papiſt.

If your Lordſhip ſhould turn the Diſcourſe to a *Quaker*, and offer him any Reaſons for embracing

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the Doctrine of the *Church* of *England*, you cannot possibly have any better Success; any one may see from your *Propositions*, that no Argument can be urged, but what your Lordship has there fully answered. For since you allow nothing to the *Truth* of Doctrines, or the *Excellency* of any Communion as such, it is demonstrable that no Church or Communion can have any Advantage above another, which is absolutely necessary in order to persuade any sensible Man to exchange any Communion for another.

Will your Lordship tell a *Quaker*, that there is any Danger in that particular Way that he is in?

He can answer from *Prop.* I, III, and IV. *That a conscientious Person cannot be in any Danger of being out of any particular Church.*

Will your Lordship tell him that his Religion is condemned by the universal Church?

He can answer from *Prop.* II. *That no Church ought to unchurch another, or declare it out of God's Favour.*

Will you tell him that Christ has instituted Sacraments as *necessary Means* of Grace, which he neglects to observe?

He will answer you from *Prop.* IX. *That God's Graces are only to be received* immediately from himself. And to think that *Bread* and *Wine*, or the sprinkling of Water, is necessary to Salvation, is as absurd, as to think any Order of the Clergy is necessary to recommend us to God.

Will your Lordship tell him that he displeases God, by not holding several Articles of Faith, which Christ has required us to believe?

He can reply from *Prop.* III. *That nothing loses us the Favour of God* but a *wicked Insincerity*. And from *Prop.* V. That as your Lordship believes such Things, not because they are actually to be believed, but because you think so; so he disbelieves them, not because they are actually false, but because he thinks so.

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Will your Lordſhip tell him he is inſincere?

He can reply from *Prop.* VI. *That to aſſume to know the Hearts and Sincerity of Men, is Nonſenſe and Blaſphemy.*

Will your Lordſhip tell him that he ought to conform to a Church eſtabliſhed by the Laws of the Land?

He can anſwer from *Prop.* VIII. That this very *Eſtabliſhment* is an Argument againſt Conformity? *For as Chriſt's Kingdom is not of this World, ſo when worldly Encouragements are annexed to it, they are ſo many Deciſions againſt Chriſt, and his own expreſs Words.* And from *Prop.* VII. *That ſeeing Chriſt is ſole King and Lawgiver in his Kingdom, and no Men have any Power of Legiſlation in it, they who would be good Members of it, muſt ſhew themſelves Subjects to Chriſt alone, without any Regard to Man's Judgment.*

I am inclined to think, my Lord, that it is now *demonſtrated* to the common Senſe of the Laity, that your Lordſhip cannot urge any Argument, either from the *Truth*, the *Advantage*, or *Neceſſity* of embracing the Doctrines of the *Church* of *England*, to either *Jew*, *Heretick*, or *Schiſmatic*, but you have helped him to a full Anſwer to any ſuch Argument, from your own Principles.

Are we, my Lord, to be treated as *popiſhly* affected for aſſerting ſome Truths, which the Papiſts join with us in aſſerting? Is it a Crime in us not to drop ſome neceſſary Doctrines, becauſe the Papiſts have not dropt them? If this is to be *popiſhly* affected, we own the Charge, and are not for being ſuch *true Proteſtants*, as to give up the *Apoſtles Creed*, or lay aſide the Sacraments, becauſe they are received by the Church of *Rome*. I cannot indeed charge your Lordſhip with being *well affected* to the Church of *Rome*, or of *England*, to the *Jews*, the *Quakers*, or *Socinians*; but this I have *demonſtrated*, and will undertake the Defence of it, that your Lordſhip's

Lordſhip's *Principles* equally ſerve them all alike, and do not give the leaſt Advantage to one Church above another, as has ſufficiently appeared from your *Principles*.

I will no more ſay your Lordſhip is in the Intereſt of the *Quakers*, or *Socinians*, or *Papiſts*, than I would charge you with being in the Intereſt of the Church of *England*; for as your Doctrines equally ſupport them all, he ought to aſk your Lordſhip's Pardon, who ſhould declare you more a Friend to one than the other.

I intended, my Lord, to have conſidered another very obnoxious Article in your Lordſhip's Doctrines concerning the *Repugnancy of temporal Encouragements to the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom*; but the Conſiſtency and Reaſonableneſs of guarding this ſpiritual Kingdom with human Laws, has been defended with ſo much Perſpicuity and Strength of Argument, and your Lordſhip's Objections ſo fully confuted by the judicious and learned Dean of *Chicheſter*, that I preſume this Part of the Controverſy is finally determined.

I hope, my Lord, that I have delivered nothing here that needs any Excuſe or Apology to the Laity, that they will not be perſuaded, through any vain Pretence of Liberty, to make themſelves Parties againſt the firſt Principles of Chriſtianity; or imagine, that whilſt we contend for the poſitive Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, the Neceſſity of Church-Communion, or the Excellency of our own, we are robbing them of their natural Rights, or interfering with their Privileges. Whilſt we appear in the Defence of any part of Chriſtianity, we are engaged for them in the common Cauſe of Chriſtians; and I am perſuaded better Things of the Laity, than to believe that ſuch Labours will render either our Perſons or Profeſſions hateful to them. Your Lordſhip has indeed endeavoured to give an invidious Turn to the

the Controverſy, by calling upon the Laity to aſſert their Liberties, as if they were in Danger from the Principles of Chriſtianity. ——— But, my Lord, what Liberty does any Layman loſe, by our aſſerting, that *Church-Communion* is neceſſary? What Privilege is taken from them by our teaching the Danger of certain Ways and Methods of Religion? Is a Man made a Slave becauſe he is cautioned againſt the Principles of the *Quakers*, againſt *Fanaticiſm*, *Popery*, or *Socinianiſm?* Is he in a State of Bondage becauſe the Sacraments are neceſſary, and none but epiſcopal Clergy ought to adminiſter them? Is his Freedom deſtroyed becauſe there is a particular Order of Men appointed by God to miniſter in holy Things, and be ſerviceable to him in recommending him to the Favour of God? Can any Perſon, my Lord, think theſe Things Breaches upon their Liberty, except ſuch as think the Commandments a Burden? Is there any more Hardſhip in ſaying thou ſhalt keep to an epiſcopal Church, than thou ſhalt be baptized? Or in requiring People to receive particular Sacraments, than to believe particular Books of Scripture to be the Word of God? If ſome other Advocate for the Laity ſhould, out of Zeal for their Rights, declare that they need not believe one half of the Articles in the Creed, if they would but aſſert their Liberty, he would be as true a Friend, and deſerve the ſame Applauſe, as he who ſhould aſſert the Neceſſity of Church-Communion is inconſiſtent with the natural Rights and Liberties of Mankind.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt

Humble Servant,

William Law.

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POSTSCRIPT.

I Hope your Lordſhip will not think it unnatural or impertinent, to offer here a Word or two in Anſwer to ſome Objections againſt my former Letter.

To begin with the Doctrine of the uninterrupted Succeſſion of the Clergy.

I have, as I think, proved that there is a divine Commiſſion required to qualify any one to exerciſe the prieſtly Office, and that ſeeing this divine Commiſſion can only be had from ſuch particular Perſons as God has appointed to give it, therefore it is neceſſary that there ſhould be a continual Succeſſion of ſuch Perſons, in order to keep up a commiſſioned Order of the Clergy. For if the Commiſſion it ſelf be to deſcend through Ages, and diſtinguiſh the Clergy from the Laity; it is certain the Perſons who alone can give this Commiſſion, muſt deſcend through the ſame Ages, and conſequently an uninterrupted Succeſſion is as neceſſary, as that the Clergy have a divine Commiſſion. Take away this Succeſſion, and the Clergy may as well be ordained by one Perſon as another; a Number of Women may as well give them a divine Commiſſion, as a Congregation of any Men; they may indeed appoint Perſons to officiate in holy Orders, for the Sake of *Decency* and *Order*; but then there is no more in it, than an external *Decency* and *Order*; they are no more the Prieſts of God, than thoſe that pretended to make them ſo. If we had loſt the Scriptures, it would be very well to make as good Books as we could, and come as near them as poſſible; but then it would be not only Folly, but Preſumption, to call them the Word of God. But I proceed to the Objections againſt the Doctrine of an uninterrupted Succeſſion.

Firſt, It is ſaid, that there is no mention made of it in Scripture, as having any Relation to the Being of a Church. *Se-*

Secondly, That it is ſubject to ſo great Uncertainty, that if it be neceſſary we cannot now be ſure we are in the Church.

Thirdly, That it is a popiſh Doctrine, and gives them great Advantage over us.

I begin with the *firſt* Objection, that there is no mention made of it in the Scriptures, which though I think I have ſufficiently anſwered in this Letter, I ſhall here farther conſider.

Pray, my Lord, is it not a true Doctrine, that *the Scriptures contain all Things neceſſary to Salvation?* But, my Lord, it is no where expreſsly ſaid, that *the Scriptures contain all Things neceſſary to Salvation.* It is no where ſaid, that no other Articles of Faith need be believed. Where does it appear in Scripture, that the Scriptures were writ by any divine Command? Have any of the Goſpels or Epiſtles this Authority to recommend them? Are they neceſſary to be believed, becauſe there is any Law of Chriſt concerning the Neceſſity of believing them?

May I reject this uninterrupted Succeſſion, becauſe it is not mentioned in Scripture? And may I not as well reject all the Goſpels? Produce your Authority, my Lord, mention your Texts of Scripture, where Chriſt has *hung the Salvation of Men* upon their believing that St. *Matthew* or St. *John* wrote ſuch a Book ſeventeen hundred years ago. Theſe, my Lord, are *Niceties* and *Trifles* which are not to be found in Scripture, and conſequently have nothing to do with the Salvation of Men.

Now if nothing be to be held as neceſſary, but what is expreſsly required in ſo many Words in Scripture, then it can neve be proved that the Scriptures themſelves are a *ſtanding Rule of Faith in all Ages*, ſince it is no where expreſsly aſſerted, nor is it any where ſaid, that the Scriptures ſhould be continued as a Rule of Faith in all Ages. Is it an Objection againſt the Neceſſity of a perpetual Succeſſion of

the Clergy, that it is not mentioned in the Scripture? And is it not as good a one againſt the *Neceſſity* of making Scripture the *ſtanding Rule of Faith in all Ages*, ſince it is never ſaid that they were to be continued as a ſtanding Rule in all Ages? If Things are only neceſſary for being ſaid to be ſo in Scripture, then all that are not thus taught are equally unneceſſary, and conſequently it is no more neceſſary that the Scripture ſhould be a fixed Rule of Faith in all Ages, than that there ſhould be Biſhops to ordain in all Ages.

Again, Where ſhall we find it in Scripture, that the Sacraments are to be continued in every Age of the Church? Where is it ſaid that they ſhall always be the ordinary Means of Grace neceſſary to be obſerved? Is there any Law of Chriſt, any Text of Scripture, that expreſsly aſſerts, that if we leave the Uſe of the Sacraments, we are out of Covenant with God? Is it any where directly ſaid, that we muſt never lay them aſide, or that they will be *perpetually* neceſſary? No, my Lord, this is a *Nicety* and *Trifle* not to be *found in Scripture: There is no Streſs laid there upon this Matter*, but upon Things *of a quite different Nature*.

I now preſume, my Lord, that every one who has common Senſe plainly ſees, that if this Succeſſion of the Clergy is to be deſpiſed, becauſe it is not expreſsly required in Scripture; it undeniably follows, that we may reject the Scriptures, as not being a *ſtanding Rule of Faith in all Ages*; we may diſuſe the Sacraments, as not the *ordinary Means of Grace in all Ages*; ſince theſe are no more mentioned in the Scriptures, or *expreſsly* required, than this uninterrupted Succeſſion.

If it be a good Argument againſt the Neceſſity of epiſcopal Ordainers, that it is never ſaid in Scripture that there ſhall *always* be ſuch Ordainers; it is certainly as concluſive againſt the Uſe of the Sacraments

ments in every Age, that it is no where said in Scripture they shall be used in *all Ages*.

If no Government or Order of the Clergy is to be held as necessary, because no such Necessity is asserted in Scripture; it is certain, this concludes as strongly against *Government*, and *the Order itself*, as against any *particular* Order. For it is no more said in Scripture that there shall be an Order of Clergy, than that there shall be any *particular* Order; therefore if this Silence proves against any *particular* Order of Clergy, it proves as much against *Order it self*.

Should therefore any of your Lordship's Friends have so much Church-Zeal, as to contend for the Necessity of *some Order*, though of no particular Order; he must fall under your Lordship's Displeasure, and be proved as meer a *Dreamer* and *Trifler*, as those who assert the Necessity of episcopal Ordination. For if it be plain that there need be no *episcopal Clergy*, because it is not said there shall *always* be episcopal Clergy; it is undeniably plain that there need be *no Order* of the Clergy, since it is no where said, there shall be *an Order* of Clergy: Therefore whoever shall contend for an Order of Clergy, will be as much condemned by your Lordship's Doctrine, as he that declares for the episcopal Clergy.

The Truth of the Matter is this; if nothing is to be esteemed of any Moment, but counted as mere *Trifle* and *Nicety* among Christians, which is not *expressly* required in the Scriptures; then it is a *Trifle* and *Nicety*, whether we believe the Scriptures to be a *standing Rule of Faith* in all Ages, whether we use the Sacraments in *all Ages*, whether we have any Clergy at all, whether we observe the Lord's Day, whether we baptize our Children, or whether we go to publick Worship; for none of these Things are expressly required in so many Words in Scripture. But if your Lordship, with the rest of the Christian

World, will take these Things to be of Moment, and well proved, because they are founded in Scripture, though not in *express Terms*, or under *plain Commands*; if you will acknowledge these Matters to be well asserted, because they may be gathered from Scripture, and are confirmed by the universal Practice of the Church in all Ages, (which is all the Proof that they are capable of,) I do not doubt but it will appear, that this *successive Order of the Clergy* is founded on the same Evidence, and supported by as great Authority, so that it must be thought of the same Moment with these Things by all unprejudiced Persons.

For, my Lord, though it be not expressly said, that there shall *always* be a *Succession of Episcopal Clergy*, yet it is a Truth founded in Scripture it self, and asserted by the universal Voice of Tradition in the first and succeeding Ages of the Church.

It is thus founded in Scripture: There we are taught that the Priesthood is a *positive Institution*; that no Man can take this Office unto himself; that neither our Saviour himself, nor his Apostles, nor any other Person, however extraordinarily endowed with Gifts from God, could, *as such*, exercise the priestly Office, till they had God's express Commission for that Purpose. Now how does it appear, that the Sacraments are positive Institutions, but that they are consecrated to such Ends and Effects, as of themselves they were no way qualified to perform? Now as it appears from Scripture that Men, *as such*, however endowed, were not qualified to take this Office upon them without God's Appointment; it is demonstratively certain, that Men so called are as much to be esteemed a *positive Institution*, as Elements so chosen can be called a *positive Institution*. All the personal Abilities of Men conferring no more Authority to exercise the Office of a Clergyman, than the natural Qualities of Water to make a Sacrament:

So

So that the one Inſtitution is as truly poſitive as the other.

Again, The Order of the Clergy is not only a *poſitive* Order inſtituted by God, but the different Degrees in this Order are of the ſame Nature. For we find in Scripture, that ſome Perſons could perform ſome Offices in the Prieſthood, which neither Deacons nor Prieſts could do, though thoſe Deacons and Prieſts were inſpired Perſons, and Workers of Miracles. Thus *Timothy* was ſent to ordain Elders, becauſe none below his Order, who was a Biſhop, could perform that Office. *Peter* and *John* laid their Hands on baptized Perſons, becauſe neither Prieſts nor Deacons, though Workers of Miracles, could execute that Part of the ſacerdotal Office.

How can we imagine that the Apoſtles and Biſhops thus diſtinguiſhed themſelves for nothing? That there was the ſame Power in *Deacons* and *Prieſts* to execute thoſe Offices, though they took them to themſelves? No, my Lord; if three Degrees in the Miniſtry are inſtituted in Scripture, we are obliged to think them as truly diſtinct in their Powers, as we are to think that the Prieſthood it ſelf contains Powers that are diſtinct from thoſe of the Laity. It is no more conſiſtent with Scripture, to ſay that *Deacons* or *Prieſts* may ordain, than that the Laity are Prieſts or Deacons. The ſame divine Inſtitution making as truly a Difference betwixt the Clergy, as it does betwixt Clergy and Laity.

Now if the Order of the Clergy be a *divine poſitive* Inſtitution, in which there are different Degrees of Power, where ſome alone can ordain, *&c.* whilſt others can only perform other Parts of the ſacred Office; if this (as it plainly appears) be a Doctrine of Scripture, then it is a Doctrine of Scripture, that there is a Neceſſity of ſuch a Succeſſion of Men as have Power to ordain. For do the Scriptures make it neceſſary that *Timothy* (or ſome Biſhop) ſhould be

ſent to *Epheſus* to ordain Prieſts, becauſe the Prieſts who were there could not ordain? And do not the ſame Scriptures make it as neceſſary, that *Timothy*'s Succeſſor be the only Ordainer, as well as he was in his Time? Will not Prieſts in the next Age be as deſtitute of the Power of ordaining, as when *Timothy* was alive? So that ſince the Scriptures teach, that *Timothy*, or Perſons of his Order, could *alone* ordain in that Age, they as plainly teach, that the Succeſſors of that Order can *alone* ordain in any Age, and conſequently the Scriptures plainly teach a Neceſſity of an *epiſcopal Succeſſion*.

The Scriptures declare there is a Neceſſity of a divine Commiſſion to execute the Office of a Prieſt; they alſo teach, that this Commiſſion can only be had from particular Perſons: Therefore the Scriptures plainly teach, there is a Neceſſity of a *Succeſſion of ſuch particular Perſons*, in order to keep up a truly *commiſſioned Clergy*.

Suppoſe when *Timothy* was ſent to *Epheſus* to ordain Elders, the Church had told him, We have choſe Elders already, and laid our Hands upon them; that if he alone was allowed to exerciſe this Power, it might ſeem as if he alone had it; or that Miniſters were the better for being ordained by his particular Hands; and that ſome Perſons might imagine they could have no Clergy, except they were ordained by him, or ſome of his Order; and that ſeeing Chriſt had no where made an expreſs Law, that ſuch Perſons ſhould be neceſſary to the Ordination of the Clergy; therefore they rejected this Authority of *Timothy*, leſt they ſhould ſubject themſelves to *Niceties* and *Trifles*.

Will your Lordſhip ſay, that ſuch a Practice would have been allowed of in the *Epheſians?* Or that Miniſters ſo ordained would have been received as the Miniſters of Chriſt? If not, why muſt ſuch Practice or ſuch Miniſters be allowed of in any After-ages?

ages? Would not the same Proceeding against any of *Timothy*'s *Successors* have deserved the same Censure, as being equally unlawful? If therefore the Scripture condemns all Ordination but what is episcopal, the Scriptures make a *Succession* of *episcopal Ordainers* necessary. So that I hope, my Lord, we shall be no more told that this is a Doctrine not mentioned in Scripture, or without any Foundation in it.

The great Objection to this Doctrine is, that this *episcopal Order of the Clergy* is only an apostolical Practice; and seeing *all* apostolical Practices are not binding to us, surely this need not.

In Answer to this, my Lord, I shall first shew, that though all apostolical Practices are not necessary, yet some may be necessary. *Secondly*, That the divine unalterable Right of Episcopacy is not founded *merely* on apostolical Practice.

To begin with the *first*; The Objection runs thus, *All apostolical Practices are not unalterable or obligatory to us, therefore no apostolical Practices are.* This, my Lord, is just as theological, as if I should say all Scripture-Truths are not Articles of Faith, or Fundamentals of Religion, therefore no Scripture-Truths are: Is not the Argument full as just and solid in one Case as the other? May there not be the same Difference between some Practices of the Apostles and others, that there is betwixt some Scripture Truths and others? Are all Truths equally important that are to be found in the Bible? Why must all Practices be of the same Moment that were apostolical? Now if there be any Way, either divine or human, of knowing an Article of Faith, from the smallest Truth, or most indifferent Matter in Scripture, they will equally assist us in distinguishing what apostolical Practices are of perpetual Obligation, and what are not. But it is a strange Way of Reasoning, that some People are fallen into, who seem to know nothing of *Moderation*, but jump as constantly out of one Ex-

tream into another, as if there was no ſuch Thing as a middle Way, or any ſuch Virtue as *Moderation*. Thus either the Church muſt have an *abſolute uncontroulable Authority*, or none at all; we muſt either hold *all* apoſtolical Practices neceſſary, or *none at all*.

Again, If no apoſtolical *Practices* can be unalterable, becauſe all are not, then no apoſtolical *Doctrines* are neceſſary to be taught in all Ages, becauſe all apoſtolical *Doctrines* are not; and we are no more obliged to teach the *Death*, *Satisfaction*, and *Reſurrection* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, than we are obliged to forbid the *eating of Blood and Things ſtrangled*. If we muſt thus blindly follow them in all their Practices, or elſe be at Liberty to leave them in all, we muſt for the ſame Reaſon implicitly teach all their *Doctrines*, or elſe have a Power of receding from them all.

For if there be any Thing in the Nature of *Doctrines*, in the *Tenor* of Scripture, or the *Senſe* of Antiquity, whereby we can know the Difference of ſome *Doctrines* from others, that ſome were *occaſional temporary* Determinations, ſuited to particular States and Conditions in the Church, whilſt others were ſuch general *Doctrines* as would concern the Church in all States and Circumſtances; if there can be this Difference betwixt apoſtolical *Doctrines*, there muſt neceſſarily be the ſame Difference betwixt apoſtolical *Practices*, unleſs we will ſay, that their *Practices* were not ſuited to their *Doctrines*. For occaſional *Doctrines* muſt produce occaſional *Practices*.

Now may we not be obliged by ſome *Practices* of the Apoſtles, where the Nature of the Thing, and the Conſent of Antiquity, ſhews it to be equally neceſſary and important in all Ages and Conditions of the Church, without being tied down to the ſtrict Obſervance of every Thing which the Apoſtles did, though it plainly appears that it was done upon *accidental* and *mutable* Reaſons? Can we not be obliged to obſerve the *Lord's Day* from apoſtolical *Practice*, without

without being equally obliged to *lock the Doors* where we are met, becauſe in the Apoſtle's Time they locked them for Fear of their Enemies.

My Lord, we are to follow the *Practices* of the Apoſtles, as we ought to follow every Thing elſe, with *Diſcretion* and *Judgment*, and not run headlong into every Thing they did, becauſe they were Apoſtles, or yet think that becauſe we need not practiſe after them in every Thing, we need do it in nothing. We beſt imitate them, when we act upon ſuch Reaſons as they acted upon, and neither make their *occaſional* Practices *perpetual* Laws, nor break through ſuch general Rules as will always have the *ſame Reaſon* to be obſerved.

If it be aſked how we can know what Practices muſt be obſerved, and what may be laid aſide? I anſwer, as we know *Articles* of Faith from *leſſer Truths*; as we know *occaſional* Doctrines from *perpetual* Doctrines; that is, from the Nature of the Things, from the *Tenor* of Scripture, and the *Teſtimony* of Antiquity

Secondly, It is not true, that the *divine unalterable Right* of Epiſcopacy is founded *merely* upon apoſtolical Practice.

We do not ſay that Epiſcopacy cannot be changed *merely* becauſe we have apoſtolical Practice for it, but becauſe ſuch is the Nature of the Chriſtian Prieſthood, that it can only be continued in that Method, which God has appointed for its Continuance. Thus Epiſcopacy is the *only* inſtituted Method of continuing the Prieſthood; therefore Epiſcopacy is *unchangeable*, not becauſe it is an apoſtolical Practice, but becauſe the Nature of the Thing requires it: A poſitive Inſtitution being only to be continued in that Method which God has appointed; ſo that it is the Nature of the Prieſthood, and not the apoſtolical Practice alone, that makes it neceſſary to be continued. The apoſtolical Practice indeed ſhews, that

Epiſ-

Epiſcopacy is the Order that is appointed, but it is the Nature of the Prieſthood that aſſures us that it is *unalterable:* And that becauſe an Office which is of no Significancy, but as it is of divine Appointment, and inſtituted by God, can no otherwiſe be continued, but in that Way of Continuance which God has appointed.

The Argument proceeds thus: The Chriſtian Prieſthood is a divine poſitive Inſtitution, which as it could only begin by the *divine Appointment*, ſo it can only deſcend to After-ages in ſuch a Method as God has been pleaſed to appoint.

The Apoſtles (and your Lordſhip owns, Chriſt was in *all* that they did*)inſtituted Epiſcopacy *alone*, therefore this Method of Epiſcopacy is unalterable, not becauſe an *apoſtolical Practice* cannot be laid aſide, but becauſe the Prieſthood can only deſcend to After-ages in ſuch a Method as is of divine Appointment.

So that the Queſtion is not fairly ſtated, when it is aſked whether Epiſcopacy, being an apoſtolical Practice, may be laid aſide? But it ſhould be aſked, whether an inſtituted particular Method of continuing the Prieſthood be not neceſſary to be continued? Whether an appointed Order of receiving a Commiſſion from God be not neceſſary to be obſerved, in order to receive a Commiſſion from him? If the Caſe was thus ſtated, as it ought, to be fairly ſtated, any one would ſoon perceive, that we can no more lay aſide Epiſcopacy, and yet continue the Chriſtian Prieſthood, than we can alter the Terms of Salvation, and be in Covenant with God.

I come now, my Lord, to the ſecond Objection, *That this uninterrupted Succeſſion is ſubject to ſo great Uncertainty, that if it be neceſſary, we can never ſay that we are in the Church.*

I know no Reaſon, my Lord, why it is ſo uncertain, but becauſe it is founded upon *hiſtorical Evidence.*

* *Anſwer to Dr.* Snape.

dence. Let it therefore be conſidered, my Lord, that Chriſtianity itſelf is a *Matter of Fact* only conveyed to us by *hiſtorical Evidence:* That the *Canon of Scripture* is only made known to us by *hiſtorical Evidence*; that we have no other Way of knowing what Writings are the Word of God; and yet the Truth of our Faith, and every other Means of Grace depends upon our Knowledge and Belief of the Scriptures. Muſt we not declare the Neceſſity of the Succeſſion of Biſhops, becauſe it can only be proved by *hiſtorical Evidence*, and that for ſuch a long Tract of Time?

Why then do we declare the Belief of the Scriptures neceſſary to Salvation? Is not this equally putting the Salvation of Men upon a *Matter of Fact*, ſupported only by *hiſtorical Evidence*, and making it depend upon Things done ſeventeen hundred Years ago? Cannot *hiſtorical Evidence* ſatisfy us in one Point, as well as in the other? Is there any Thing in the Nature of this Succeſſion, that it cannot be as well aſſerted by *hiſtorical Evidence*, as the Truth of the Scriptures? Is there not the ſame bare Poſſibility in the Thing it ſelf, that the Scriptures may in ſome important Points be corrupted, as that this Succeſſion may be broke? But is this any juſt Reaſon why we ſhould believe, or fear, that the Scriptures are corrupted, becauſe there is a phyſical Poſſibility of it, though there is all the Proof that can be required of the contrary? Why then muſt we ſet aſide the Neceſſity of this Succeſſion from a *bare Poſſibility* of Error, though there is all the Proof that can be required, that it never was broken, but ſtrictly kept up?

And though your Lordſhip has told the World ſo much of the *Improbability*, *Nonſenſe*, and *Abſurdity* of this Succeſſion, yet I promiſe your Lordſhip an Anſwer, whenever you ſhall think fit to ſhow, *when*, or *how*, or *where*, this Succeſſion broke, or *ſeemed* to break, or was *likely* to break.

And

And till then, I shall content myself with offering this Reason to your Lordship, why it is *morally impossible* it ever should have broken in all the Term of Years, from the Apostles to the present Times.

The Reason is this; it has been a received Doctrine in every Age of the Church, that no Ordination was valid but that of Bishops: This Doctrine, my Lord, has been a constant Guard upon the *episcopal Succession*; for seeing it was universally believed that Bishops *alone* could ordain, it was *morally impossible* that any Persons could be received as Bishops, who had not been so ordained.

Now is it not *morally impossible* that in our Church any one should be made a Bishop without *episcopal Ordination?* Is there any Possibility of forging Orders, or stealing a Bishoprick by any other Stratagem? No, it is *morally impossible*, because it is an acknowledged Doctrine amongst us, that a Bishop can only be ordained by Bishops. Now as this Doctrine must necessarily prevent any one being a Bishop without *episcopal Ordination* in our Age, so it must have the same Effect in every other Age as well as ours; and consequently it is as reasonable to believe that the Succession of Bishops was not broke in any Age since the Apostles, as that it was not broke in our own Kingdom within these forty Years. For the same Doctrine which preserves it forty Years, may as well preserve it forty hundred Years, if it was equally believed in all that Space of Time. That this has been the constant Doctrine of the Church, I presume your Lordship will not deny; I have not here entered into the historical Defence of it; this, and indeed every other Institution of the Christian Church, has been lately so well defended from the ecclesiastical Records by a very excellent and judicious Writer. *

* *Original Draught of the Primitive Church.*

We

We believe the Scriptures are not corrupted, becauſe it was always a received Doctrine in the Church, that they were the *ſtanding Rule of Faith*, and becauſe the Providence of God may well be ſuppoſed to preſerve ſuch Books as were to convey to every Age the Means of Salvation. The ſame Reaſons prove the great Improbability that this Succeſſion ſhould ever be broke, both becauſe it was always againſt a received Doctrine to break it, and becauſe we may juſtly hope the Providence of God would keep up his own Inſtitution.

I muſt here obſerve, that though your Lordſhip often expoſes the Impoſſibility of this Succeſſion, yet at other times, even you your ſelf, and your Advocates, aſſert it. Thus you tell us, *That the Papiſts have one regular Appointment or uninterrupted Succeſſion of Biſhops undefiled with the touch of Lay-hands.* *

Is this Succeſſion then ſuch an *improbable impoſſible* Thing, and yet can your Lordſhip aſſure us that it is at *Rome*; that though it be ſeventeen hundred Years old there, yet that it is a true one? Is it ſuch *Abſurdity*, and *Nonſenſe*, and every Thing that is *ridiculous*, when we lay Claim to it; and yet can your Lordſhip aſſure us that it is not only poſſible to be, but *actually* is in Being, in the Church of *Rome*; What Arguments or Authority can your Lordſhip produce, to ſhew that there is a Succeſſion there, that will not equally prove it to be here?

You aſſert expreſsly, that there is a *true Succeſſion* there; you deny that we have it here; therefore your Lordſhip muſt mean, that we have not epiſcopal Ordination when we ſeparated from the Church of *Rome*. And here the Controverſy muſt reſt betwixt you and your Adverſaries, *whether we had epiſcopal Ordination* then; for as your Lordſhip has expreſsly affirmed

* *Preſervative*, p 80.

affirmed that there is this uninterrupted Succeſſion in the Church of *Rome*, it is impoſſible that we ſhould want it, unleſs we had not epiſcopal Ordination at the *Reformation*.

Whenever your Lordſhip ſhall pleaſe to appear in Defence of the *Nag's-Head Story*, or any other Pretence againſt our epiſcopal Ordination when we departed from *Rome*, we ſhall beg Leave to ſhew our ſelves ſo far true Proteſtants, as to anſwer any *Popiſh* Argument your Lordſhip can produce.

Here let the *common Senſe* of the Laity be once more appealed to: Your Lordſhip tells them that an *uninterrupted Succeſſion* is improbable, abſurd, and *morally* ſpeaking, *impoſſible*, and, for this Reaſon, they need not trouble their Heads about it; yet in another Place you poſitively affirm, that this true *uninterrupted Succeſſion* is actually in the Church of *Rome:* That is, they are to deſpiſe this Succeſſion, becauſe it never was, or ever can be; yet are to believe that it *really* is in the *Romiſh* Church. My Lord, this comes very near *ſaying* and *unſaying*, *to the great Diverſion of the Papiſts.* Muſt they not laugh at your Lordſhip's *Proteſtant Zeal*, which might be much better called the *Spirit* of Popery? Muſt they not be highly pleaſed with all your Banter and Ridicule upon an *uninterrupted Succeſſion*, when they ſee you ſo kindly accept theirs: And think it only *Nonſenſe* and *Abſurdity* when claimed by any other Church? Surely, my Lord, they muſt conceive great Hopes of your Lordſhip, ſince you have here rather choſe to contradict your ſelf, than not vouch for their Succeſſion: For you have ſaid it is *morally impoſſible*, yet affirm that it is with them.

The third Objection againſt this *uninterrupted Succeſſion* is this, that it is a *Popiſh Doctrine*, and *gives* Papiſts *Advantage over us.*

The Objection proceeds thus, We muſt not aſſert the Neceſſity of this Succeſſion, becauſe the *Papiſts* lay

ſay it is only to be found with them. I might add, becauſe ſome mighty zealous *Proteſtants* ſay ſo too.

But if this be good Argumentation, we ought not to tell the *Jews*, or *Deiſts*, &c. that there is any Neceſſity of embracing Chriſtianity, becauſe the *Papiſts* ſay Chriſtians can only be ſaved in their Church.

Again, we ought not to inſiſt upon a true Faith, becauſe the *Papiſts* ſay that a true Faith is only in their Communion. So that there is juſt as much Popery in teaching this Doctrine, as in aſſerting the Neceſſity of Chriſtianity to a *Jew*, or the Neceſſity of a right Faith to a *Socinian*, &c.

I ſhall only trouble your Lordſhip with a Word or two concerning another Point in my former Letter. I there proved that your Lordſhip has put the whole of our Title to God's Favour upon Sincerity, *as ſuch*, independent of every Thing elſe. That no Purity of Worſhip, no Excellence of Order, no Truth of Faith, no Sort of Sacraments, no Kind of Inſtitutions, or any Church, *as ſuch*, can help us to the leaſt Degree of God's Favour, or give us the ſmalleſt Advantage above any other Communion. And conſequently, that your Lordſhip has ſet ſincere *Jews*, *Quakers*, *Socinians*, *Muggletonians*, and all *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics*, upon the ſame Bottom, as to the Favour of God, with ſincere Chriſtians.

Upon this, my Lord, I am called upon to prove that theſe ſeveral Sorts of People can be *ſincere* in your Account of Sincerity. To which, my Lord, I make this Anſwer, Either there are ſome ſincere Perſons among *Jews*, *Quakers*, *Socinians*, or any kind of *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics*, or there are not; if there are, your Lordſhip has given them the ſame Title to God's Favour, that you have to the ſincereſt Chriſtians; if you will ſay there are no ſincere Perſons amongſt any of them, then your Lordſhip

ſhip damns them all in the Groſs; for ſurely Corruptions in Religion, profeſſed with Inſincerity, will never ſave People.

I have nothing to do to prove the Sincerity of any of them; if they are ſincere, what I have ſaid is true; if you will not allow them to be ſincere, you condemn them all at once.

Again, I humbly ſuppoſed a Man might be ſincere in his *religious Opinions*, though it might be owing to *ſome ill Habits*, or *ſomething criminal* in himſelf, that he was fallen into ſuch or ſuch a Way of thinking. But it ſeems this is all *Contradiction*; and no Man can be ſincere, who has *any Faults*, or whoſe *Faults* have any *Influence* upon his Way of thinking.

Your Lordſhip tells all the *Diſſenters*, that they may be eaſy if they are ſincere; and that it is the only Ground for Peace and Satisfaction. But pray, my Lord, if none are to be eſteemed *ſincere*, but thoſe who have no Faults, or whoſe Faults have no Influence upon their Perſuaſions, who can be aſſured that he is *ſincere*, but he that has the leaſt Pretence to it, the *proud Phariſee?* If your Lordſhip, or your Advocates, were deſired to prove your Sincerity, either before God or Man, it muſt be for theſe Reaſons, becauſe you have no ill Paſſions or Habits, no faulty Prejudices, no paſt or preſent Vices, that can have any Effect upon your Minds. My Lord, as this is the only Proof that any of you could give of your own Sincerity, in this Meaning of it, ſo the very Pretence to it, would prove the Want of it.

F I N I S.

A

REPLY

TO THE

Bishop of *BANGOR*'s

ANSWER

TO THE

REPRESENTATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE

OF

CONVOCATION.

Humbly addressed to his Lordship.

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The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in Pater-noster-Row.

MDCCLXII.

Price Two Shillings and Six-pence.

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My

My Lord,

I Beg leave to trouble your Lordſhip and the World once more with my Remarks upon the Doctrines you have lately delivered. Your *Sermon* and *Preſervative* I have already conſidered in the moſt impartial manner I could; and ſhall now examine your Anſwer to the *Repreſentation* of the Learned *Committee*, both as it is an Anſwer to that, and as it contains Opinions contrary to the fundamental Articles of Chriſtianity.

I have leſs need of excuſing to your Lordſhip this third Addreſs, ſince you can ſo eaſily acquit your ſelf from the Trouble of making any Reply to whatever comes from me. It ſeems I have too ſmall a Reputation to deſerve your Notice; but if the *Dean of* Chicheſter *would but declare for the Doctrines*

delivered in my Letters, and put but a little of his Reputation upon the iſſue, then, you ſay, *you would ſubmit to the Employment* of an Anſwer †.

My Lord, I readily confeſs that I have neither *Reputation* nor *Learning*, nor any *Title* to recommend me to your Lordſhip's Notice; but I muſt own, that I thought the very *want of theſe* would, in your Opinion, qualify me to make better Enquiries into Religious Truths, and raiſe your Eſteem of me as a Correſpondent in theſe Matters. For you expreſsly declare, that *if* Learning *or* Literature *is to be intereſted in this Debate, then the moſt learned Man has certainly a Title to be the Univerſal Judge* *. So that no Man ought to ſhew any Regard to *Learning*, as a *Qualification* in religious Diſputes, unleſs he will own that the moſt learned Man has a Title to be a Pope, or as you expreſs it, the *Univerſal Judge*. Yet your Lordſhip, in ſpight of this Proteſtant Doctrine ſo lately delivered, has deſpiſed and overlooked all my Opinions in Religion merely for my want of *Character* and *Learning*, and has promiſed to undertake the *needleſs* Taſk of examining thoſe Opinions with another Gentleman, merely upon account of his *Character* and *Reputation*. So that though it is perfect Popery, and making the moſt learned Man the uni-

† *Anſw. to Conſid. of our Saviour vindicated*, p. 112.
* *Anſw. to Rep.* p. 99.

verſal

verſal Judge, to allow any thing to Learning; yet your Lordſhip is ſo *true a Proteſtant*, and pays ſo great a Regard to Learning, that you will not ſo much as examine a Doctrine with a Perſon of no Character for Learning.

Again you ſay; *Nothing has been ſeen to adminiſter ſo many Doubts and Differences* (in Religion) *as Learning* *, and that *none are ſeen to be leſs ſecure from Error than learned Men.*

Now is it not ſtrange, my Lord, that after this noble Declaration againſt *Learning*, as the greateſt Cauſe of Doubts and Differences, this extraordinary Preference given to *Ignorance*, as a more likely Guide to Truth, you ſhould deſpiſe any one as below your Notice in religious Diſputes, becauſe he wants *that* Learning which ſo blinds the Underſtanding? Can you aſcribe thus much Honour to Learning, which in your Opinion does ſo much Diſhonour to Religion? Will you *intereſt* thoſe Qualities in this Debate, which if they are allowed to have any *Intereſt* in it, will make the Man of the greateſt Abilities the *Univerſal Judge.*

Again, As a farther Reaſon why you have taken no notice of me, you ſay, as *conſiderable a Writer as Mr.* Law *is*, *I hope the Committee*, as a Body, *are much more conſiderable in the Dean's Eyes*; *I am ſure*,

* *Ibid.* p. 98.

they are in mine: And the Dean himſelf, I have thought a much more conſiderable Writer than Mr. Law, *and ſo have* ſpent all my time upon *Him* and the *Committee.*

Now, my Lord, though I readily acknowledge this to be exceeding true, and have ſo far at leaſt a juſt Opinion of my ſelf, as to be afraid to be compared to much leſs Perſons than the Dean, or any of the learned Committee, yet, my Lord, this Reaſon, which, if urged by any one elſe, might paſs for a good one, cannot be urged by you, without contradicting a principal Doctrine maintained in your *Anſwer to the Repreſentation.* For there you bid us *look into the Popiſh Countries; and ſee whether* one illiterate honeſt *Man be not as capable of judging for himſelf in Religion, as all their* learned *Men united; even ſuppoſing them met together in a* General Council, *with all poſſible Marks of Solemnity and Grandeur* *.

Here we ſee a Perſon merely for his want of *Literature* made as good a Judge in Religion, as a *General Council* of the moſt learned Men, acting with the utmoſt Solemnity. We ſee a Council in its utmoſt Perfection contemptuouſly compared to, and even made leſs conſiderable than a private illiterate Perſon. And this we may fairly ſuppoſe was intended to ſhew your Contempt of

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 98.

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the *Engliſh Convocation*. But a few Weeks after, when you had another Deſign in your Head, you tell us to this purpoſe, that you diſregarded the Writings of a ſingle Perſon of no Figure in the learned World, to pay your Reſpect to the Committee as a *Body, which, as ſuch, is much more conſiderable in your Eyes*. So that here an *illiterate* Perſon is made a great Judge in Religion in regard to a Body of learned Men, becauſe he is illiterate; and here that ſame Perſon is made of no Conſideration in Points of Religion in regard to a *Body* of learned Men, merely becauſe he is *private and illiterate*.

It will be of no Advantage to your Lordſhip, to ſay that you have only replied to the *Dean*, in relation to me; in the *ſame* Words that he uſed to you, in relation to Mr. *Sykes*.

For, my Lord, that Reply might be proper enough from the Dean, if he judged right of Mr. *Sykes*'s Performance; it being very reaſonable to overlook an Adverſary that has neither Truth, Abilities, or Reputation to ſupport his Cauſe.

But though this might be right in the Dean, who pays a true Regard to the Authority and Learning of great Men, yet it cannot be defended by your Lordſhip. For though my *Learning* or *Reputation* were ever ſo low, they are ſo far from unqualifying me for religious Enquiries, that if you would ſincerely ſtand to

what you have ſaid, you ought, for the want of theſe very Accompliſhments, to eſteem me the more, and even chuſe me out as a Correſpondent in this Debate.

But however, without any farther Regard to the Opinion your Lordſhip has either of me or my Abilities, I ſhall proceed to the moſt impartial Examination of your Book that I poſſibly can.

Of the Nature of the Church.

TO begin with your Lordſhip's Deſcription of a Church; *The Number of Men, whether ſmall or great, whether diſperſed or united, who truly and ſincerely are Subjects to Chriſt alone in Matters of Salvation* *.

The learned Committee calls this your Lordſhip's Deſcription of a Church.

Your Lordſhip anſwers; *I wonder to hear this called my Deſcription of* A Church; *whereas I pretend, in thoſe Words to deſcribe no other, but* The Univerſal Inviſible Church. *It is a Deſcription, not of* A Church, *in our modern way of ſpeaking; but of* The Church, the Inviſible Church of Chriſt †.

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* *Serm.* p. 17. † *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 70.

May

May not we alſo wonder, my Lord, that you ſhould ſo deſcribe *The* Church, that it will not bear being call'd *A* Church? If I ſhould ſay it is a Deſcription of no Church, I have your Lordſhip's Confeſſion, that it is not *A* Church; ſo that it is ſomething betwixt *a Church* and no Church, that is, it is *The Church*.

Suppoſe, my Lord, ſome body or other ſhould have a mind to be of your Church, if he betakes himſelf to *A Church*, he is wrong; you do not mean *A Church*, but *The Church*. Your Lordſhip owns that this is not a Deſcription of a Church in the modern way of ſpeaking; I humbly preſume to call upon your Lordſhip to ſhew that it is a Deſcription according to the ancient way of ſpeaking. To call the Number of Believers the Inviſible Church, is a way of ſpeaking, no more to be found in the Scriptures, than the Company of *Præ-Adamites*.

There is, no doubt of it, an Inviſible Church, *i. e.* a Number of Beings that are in Covenant with God, who are not to be ſeen by human Eyes; and we may be ſaid to be Members of this *Inviſible Church*, as we are intitled to the ſame Hopes and Expectations. But to call the Number of Men and Women who believe in Chriſt and obſerve his Inſtitutions, whether diſperſed or united in this viſible World, to call theſe *The Inviſible Church*, is as falſe and groundleſs, as to call

them the Order of *Angels*, or the Church of *Seraphims*. The Profeſſion of Chriſtians is as viſible as any other Profeſſion, and as much declared by viſible external Acts. And it is as proper to call a Number of Men practiſing *Law* or *Phyſick*, an Inviſible Society of *Lawyers* and *Phyſicians*, as to call the Church on Earth the *Inviſible* Church. For all thoſe Acts and Offices which prove People to be Chriſtians, or the Church of Chriſt, are as viſible and notorious, as thoſe which prove them to be of any particular ſecular Employment. Would it be proper to call the Number of *Infidels* and *Idolaters* the Inviſible Church of the Devil? Are they not viſibly under the Dominion of the Powers of Darkneſs? Are they not viſibly out of Chriſt's Church? Muſt it not therefore be as viſible who is in this Church, as who is not in it?

If any one ſhould tell us that we are to believe *Inviſible* Scriptures, and obſerve *Inviſible* Sacraments, he would have juſt as much Reaſon and Scripture of his ſide, as your Lordſhip has for this Doctrine. And it would be of the ſame Service to the World to talk of theſe *Inviſibilities*, if the *Canon* of Scripture was in diſpute, as to deſcribe this *Inviſible* Church, when the Caſe is, with what *Viſible* Church we ought to unite.

Our Saviour himſelf tells us, that *the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Net that was caſt into the Sea, and gathered of every kind*;

kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down, and gathered the good into Vessels, but cast the bad away. And then says, *so shall it be at the end of the World*.*

This, my Lord, is a Description of the State of Christ's Church given us by himself. Is there any thing in this Description that should lead us to take it for an *Invisible* Kingdom, that consists of one particular sort of People *invisibly* united to Christ? Nay, is it not the whole Intent of this Similitude to teach us the contrary, that his Kingdom is to consist of a Mixture of good and bad Subjects till the End of the World? The Kingdom of Christ is said here to gather its Members, as a Net gathers *all kinds* of Fish; it is chiefly compared to it in this respect, because it gathers of *all kinds*; which I suppose is a sufficient Declaration, that this Kingdom consists of Subjects good and bad, as that the Net that gathers of every kind of Fish, takes good and bad Fish. Let us suppose that the Church of Christ was this *Invisible Number* of People united to Christ by such internal invisible Graces; is it possible that a Kingdom consisting of this one particular sort of People *invisibly good*, should be like a Net that gathers of *every kind* of Fish? If it was to be compared to a Net, it

* *Matth.* 13. 47.

ought

ought to be compared to such a Net, as gathers only of one kind, *viz.* good Fish and then it might represent to us a Church that has but one sort of Members.

But since Christ who certainly understood the Nature of his own Kingdom, has declared that it is like a Net that gathers *of every kind of Fish*; it is as absurd to say, that it consists only of *one kind* of Persons (*viz.* the invisibly good) as to say, that the Net which gathers of *every kind*, has only of *one kind* in it. Farther; *when it was full they drew it to shore, and gathered the good into Vessels, but cast the bad away*; *so shall it be at the end of the World.* Now as it was the bad as well the good Fish which filled the *Net*, and the Church is compared to the *Net* in this respect; so it is evident that bad Men as well as good are Subjects of this Kingdom. And I presume they are Members of that Kingdom which they fill up, as surely as the the Fish must be in the *Net* before they can fill it. All these Circumstances plainly declare that the Church or Kingdom of Christ shall consist of a Mixture of good and bad People to the End of the World.

Again; Christ declares *that the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a certain King which made a marriage for his Son*, and sent his Servants out into the High-ways, who *gathered together all as many as they found, both*

both good and bad, and the Wedding was filled with Guests *.

Nothing can be more evident than that the chief Intent of this Parable is to shew that the Church of Christ is to be a Mixture of good and bad People to the end of the World. It is like a *Feast* where good and bad Guests are entertained; but can it be like such a *Feast* if only the *invisibly* virtuous are Members of it? If the Subjects of this Kingdom are of one *invisible kind*, how can they bear any Resemblance to a *Feast* made up of *all kinds* of Guests? Nay, what could be thought of, more unlike to this Kingdom, if it was such a Kingdom as you have represented it?

How could our blessed Saviour have more directly guarded against such a Description of his Kingdom as your Lordship has given us, than he has done in these Parables? He compares it to a Quantity of good and bad Fish in a *Net*, to a Number of good and bad Guests at a *Feast*. Are there any Words that could more fully declare his Meaning to be, that his Kingdom consisted of good and bad Subjects? Could any one more directly contradict this Account of our Saviour, than by saying that his Kingdom is an invisible Kingdom consisting of a particular sort of People invisibly virtuous?

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* *Matth.* 22. 2.

Your

Your Lordſhip profeſſes a mighty Regard for the Scriptures, and a great Diſlike to all Doctrines that are not delivered there; pray, my Lord, produce but ſo much as *one Text* of Scripture; tell us the *Apoſtle* or *Evangeliſt* that ever declared the *Number of Believers whether diſperſed or united on Earth, to be the Univerſal Inviſible Church*; ſhew us any one Paſſage in Scripture which teaches us, that none are of the Church of Chriſt, but thoſe who have ſuch *Inviſible Virtues*, and cannot be known to be ſo.

There is as much Authority from Scripture to prove that the Church is a Kingdom without any Subjects, as that they are only of it, who have ſuch Inviſible Graces. And it is as eaſy to prove from thoſe ſacred Writings, that neither Chriſt or his Apoſtles were ever *Viſible* on Earth, as that the Number of People on Earth who believe in Chriſt conſtitute the *Inviſible Church*.

In the Parables above mentioned it is out of all doubt that our Saviour deſcribes his *Univerſal Kingdom* or *Church*: It is alſo certain that the *Univerſal* Inviſible Church, which you call Chriſt's Church, cannot be this *Univerſal Church* that is made up of a Mixture of good and bad Members. I therefore beg of your Lordſhip to let us know where Chriſt has taught us, that he has two *Univerſal Churches* on Earth; for if you cannot ſhew that he has declared that he has

these two Universal Churches, you must allow that this which you have described, is a Church of your own setting up, not only without any Authority, but even against the express Word of Scripture.

Your Lordship says that the Doctrines which the Learned Committee have condemned, if they be of that evil Tendency, must be so *either with Regard to the* Universal Invisible Church, *made up of all those who sincerely in their Hearts believe in Christ*; *or with respect to the* Universal Visible Church *made up of all, who in all Countries (whether sincerely or insincerely) openly profess to believe in Christ*; *or with respect to* some particular Visible Church *.

It may be justly expected, my Lord, that you should shew us some Grounds for this Distinction. Where does our blessed Lord give us so much as the least Hint that he has founded two Universal Churches on Earth? Did he describe his Church by halves when he likened it to a *Net* full of all kinds of Fish? Has he any where let us know that he has another Universal Kingdom on Earth besides this, which in the Variety of its Member is like a *Net* full of all sorts of good and bad Fish.

Let your Lordship, if you can, shew any Subtilties in *Popery* which are more of human Inven-

* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 5.

tion,

tion, or more contrary to Scripture than this refined Distinction. The *Opus Operatum* in the Sacraments, the *temporal* Satisfactions for Sins, Works of *Supererogation*, or any of the nicest Arts of *Jesuitism*, are not less founded in Scripture than this nice Distinction, of injuring either the *Universal Invisible*, or the *Universal Visible*, or a *particular Visible Church*. For, my Lord, the Church of Christ is as truly one and the same Church, as the Sacrament of Baptism is one and the same Baptism; and he no more instituted several sorts of Churches, than he instituted several kinds of Baptism.

Pray, my Lord, therefore be no longer angry at *Human Arts* in Religion; why may not *Popery* have its Peculiarities in Doctrine as well as your Lordship; the Church of *Rome*, with all its Additions and Corruptions, and pompous Ornaments, is as much like the Church as it was in the *Apostles* Times, as your *Invisible Church* is like that which Christ declared to be his Church. When they set out the Church as *Infallible*, they do but *reason* like your Lordship, when you describe it as *Invisible*.

That there are good and bad Church-men, is past all doubt; but that People are of the Church by means of *invisible Virtues*, is as false, as that only good Men came to the Feast in the Gospel We are assured that *many are called, but few are chosen*; *i. e.* that many shall

ſhall be made Members of Chriſt's Church, but few ſhall be ſaved; and who theſe few are that truly work out their Salvation, may be *inviſible* to us; but thoſe many that were called, that is, who were in the Church, though they did not live up to all the Intents of Church-Communion, yet were as truly of the Church, as the bad Fiſh were really in the Net.

But to preceed; I ſhall illuſtrate this Reply of your Lordſhip concerning an *Univerſal Viſible, and Univerſal Inviſible, and particular Viſible Church*, with the following Inſtances.

Let us ſuppoſe any one was charged with writing againſt the *Sacraments*; if he ſhould with your Lordſhip reply, that this Charge againſt him muſt either relate to the *Univerſal Viſible Sacraments*, or *Univerſal Inviſible Sacraments*, or *particular Viſible Sacraments*, he would have juſt as much *Scripture* or *Reaſon* to ſupport that Diſtinction, as your Lordſhip has for dividing the Church into *Univerſal Viſible*, and *Univerſal Inviſible*, and *particular Viſible*. For the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, or Church-Memberſhip, is as external and viſible a thing, as the Sacraments are external viſible Inſtitutions. So that it is as contrary to Scripture, and as mere an human Invention to make Pretence of an *Univerſal Inviſible Church*, when the Diſpute is concerning Chriſt's Church on Earth, as it

is

is to have recourſe to *Inviſible Sacraments*, if the Queſtion was concerning *Chriſt's Sacraments*.

They are both equally external and viſible; and as the Sacraments may be received without any ſpiritual Advantage, ſo Perſons may be of the Church and yet not be ſaved. And as the Sacraments are not leſs Sacraments, though they may not convey the deſigned Benefits to the Receiver; ſo neither are ſuch a Number of People not of the Church, though they do not obtain that Salvation which is the intended Conſequence of Church-Communion.

Your Lordſhip cannot give any one Reaſon for introducing this Diſtinction with Regard to the Church, which will not equally hold for the ſame Diſtinction in Regard to the Sacraments; and there is exactly the ſame *Quakery* and *Fanaticiſm* in one Doctrine as the other.

For as they are the *Sacraments* which chiefly conſtitute the *Church*, ſo no *Diſtinctions* or *Diviſions* can with any tolerable Propriety be applied to the Church, but ſuch as may be alſo applied to the *Sacraments*, that conſtitute the *Church*. And therefore the Terms *Univerſal* and *Particular*, *Viſible* and *Inviſible*, have no more to do with Chriſt's Church which he has inſtituted in *this World*, than with the two Sacraments which he alſo inſtituted, *Baptiſm*, and the *Supper* of the Lord.

Again,

Again, If any one was accuſed of writing againſt the *Chriſtian Revelation*, he might anſwer with your Lordſhip, if this Accuſation be true, it muſt be ſo either with regard to God's *Univerſal Viſible* Revelation in all the *Canonical* Books, or with Regard to his *Univerſal Inviſible Revelation* whereby he ſpeaks inwardly to all *ſincere* People, or with reſpect to ſome *particular* Part of his *viſible Revelation*. Let all the World judge, whether if a Perſon ſo accuſed ſhould make this Reply, it would not plainly appear, either that he was a downright *Enthuſiaſt*, or a crafty Dealer in *Cant* and *artificial* Words. I am ſure your Lordſhip cannot ſhew that you have more Authority to divide the Church on Earth into *Univerſal Viſible*, and *Univerſal Inviſible*, and *particular Viſible*, then he had to divide the Chriſtian *Revelation* into *Viſible* and *Inviſible*. Neither was it leſs to the purpoſe for ſuch a one to talk of *Inviſible* Scriptures, if he was accuſed of denying the *Goſpel* of St. *John*, than it is for your Lordſhip under your preſent Accuſation to have recourſe to the *Inviſible* Church; but your Lordſhip will find no Advantage in this Retreat.

Again; Suppoſe a Perſon was charged with writing *Treaſon* againſt the Government, and in his Defence ſhould thus diſtinguiſh; *The Treaſon* that I am charged with againſt the Government, muſt relate either to *Univerſal*

Government in this World, or to *Univerſal* Government in the *other World*, or to ſome *particular* Government in this World.

It would be as *ingenuous*, as *ſincere*, and as *pertinent* for a Perſon thus accuſed to talk of Governments that had no relation to the Caſe, but in his own Imagination, as for your Lordſhip in the preſent Diſpute to talk of *Univerſal Viſible*, and *Univerſal Inviſible*, and *particular Viſible* Churches. For beſides this, that there is no Foundation for ſuch a Diſtinction, yet if there was ſuch an Inviſible Church, how is it poſſible your Lordſhip ſhould hurt it? How is it poſſible the *Learned Committee* ſhould mean to charge you with injuring it? They might as well think your Lordſhip capable of forming a Deſign to arreſt a Party of *Spirits*, as to attack an Inviſible Church that neither you nor they know any thing of, or where to find.

Your Lordſhip ſaith, *That if you have unjuſtly laid any thing down in this Deſcription of the Inviſible Church, to the Prejudice or Injury of any Particular Viſible Church*, you acknowledge *that it is your part to anſwer for it* *.

I believe it appears already that your Lordſhip has a great deal to anſwer for upon this Head; and I ſhall now farther ſhew, that you have ſet up this *Inviſible Church* in Oppoſi-

* *Anſw. to Rep.* p. 70.

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tion to *all other* Churches *whatever*. This will appear from the following Paſſage in your Sermon; *This Inquiry will bring us back to the firſt, which is the only true Account of the Church of Chriſt or Kingdom of Chriſt in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, viz. *the Number of Men whether ſmall or great* *, &c.

We have your Lordſhip's Confeſſion that you only here pretend to deſcribe the *Univerſal Inviſible* Church of Chriſt; you alſo here plainly declare, that *it is the only true Account of Chriſt's Church or Kingdom in the Mouth of a Chriſtian.*

Is not this my Lord, expreſſly declaring, that *any other* Account of Chriſt's Church is not a true one; for you ſay this is the *only true* one? Is it not directly affirming that any other Deſcription of Chriſt's Church cannot become the Mouth of a Chriſtian; for you ſay that this is the *only true one in the Mouth of a Chriſtian?* So that if we call the Univerſal Viſible Church, the Church of Chriſt, we give a falſe Account of Chriſt's Church, and ſuch a one as is unfit for the Mouth of a Chriſtian.

Could your Lordſhip have thought of any thing more ſhocking, than to ſay that the Deſcription of your *Inviſible Church is the only true Account* of Chriſt's Church, and fit for the Mouth of a Chriſtian, when our Saviour

* P. 16.

has given us a quite contrary Account of it from his own Mouth? He compares it to a *Net* full of good and bad Fiſh, to a *Feaſt* full of good and bad Gueſts; this ſurely, my Lord, is not an Account of your *Inviſible* Church, where there are only Inviſible Members. Your Lordſhip cannot ſay that Chriſt has here deſcribed the *Inviſible Church*; you directly ſay that your Deſcription of the Inviſible Church, is the only true Account of Chriſt's Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian; and conſequently this Account which our Saviour himſelf has given of his Church, ſtands condemned by your Lordſhip as a falſe Account of Chriſt's Church unfit for the Mouth of a Chriſtian. I appeal to the common Senſe of every Reader, whether I have laid any thing to your Charge, but what your own expreſs Words amount to. The ſhort is this; If Chriſt has in theſe Parables deſcribed the *Univerſal Church* as Viſible, then it is plain that this Account of Chriſt's Church is a falſe one in the Mouth of a Chriſtian; for you ſay your Account of the Inviſible Church is *the only true Account of Chriſt's Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*; ſo that nothing can ſecure this Account which our Saviour has given of his Church from your Lordſhip's Cenſure, but ſhewing that it is the very *ſame Account of the Inviſible Church* that you have given; which I believe is more than your Lordſhip will undertake to prove; it being

being as hard to prove that a Net full of good and bad Fiſh, or a Feaſt full of good and bad Gueſts, ſhould repreſent an Inviſible Kingdom of only one ſort of Subjects, as that the Net and Feaſt, though both *full*, ſhould repreſent a Kingdom that had not *one* Subject in it.

If a *Fanatick* ſhould deſcribe the Chriſtian Sacraments, as *Spiritual* and *Inviſible* Sacraments, and then affirm that that was the *only true Account of Chriſtian* Sacraments *in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, could we charge him with leſs than writing againſt *all* Sacraments but *Inviſible* Sacraments? It is juſt thus far that your Lordſhip has proceeded againſt the *External Viſible* Church; you have declared the Inviſible one to be the *only true Church*, fit to be ſpoke of by a Chriſtian, which I think is laying down a Poſition highly injurious to the Viſible Church, ſince it is here condemned as falſe in the Mouth of a Chriſtian.

From all this it appears, that the *Learned Committee* have juſtly diſliked your Lordſhip's Deſcription of the Church of Chriſt.

Firſt; As you deſcribe it as an Inviſible Church, directly contrary to the Scripture Repreſentations of it, as given by our Saviour himſelf.

Secondly; As it is in Diſparagement of the *Article* of our Church, which gives quite another Deſcription of the Church.

That the Church described in the *Article* falls under your Lordship's Censure, is very plain. For you declare that your Description of the Invisible, is the only true Account of Christ's Church; therefore the Description in the Article cannot be a true one, because it is different from yours, which is the only true one.

Secondly; You declare that you consider the Church under this Description, *viz.* as *Invisible*, because every other Notion of it, is made up of inconsistent Images *: Therefore the Account of the Church in the Article is thus inconsistent.

Now what does your Lordship answer here? Only this, *that the Article speaks of* the Visible Church, *and you speak of the Invisible one* †.

This Answer, my Lord, proves the Charge upon you to be just. For since you own that you describe another Church than that which is described in the *Article*, and expressly affirm that your Account of this other Church is the only *true Account of Christ's Church in the Mouth of a Christian*; you plainly declare that the other Church is a false one in the Mouth of a Christian. Yet your Lordship rests satisfied with this Reply, as if you had cleared your self by it. Whereas this is the very Charge itself, That you have described

* *Serm.* p. 10. † *Answ. to Repr.* p. 78.

ſcribed the Church otherwiſe than it is in the Article, and have called this *different* and *new* Account of it, the *only true Account* of it; and if it be the only true one, then that which is given in the *Article* muſt be a falſe one.

Your Lordſhip goes on, *The Article declares what it is, that makes every ſuch Congregation, the* Viſible Church *of Chriſt; and I deſcribe what it is that makes every particular Man, a Member of Chriſt's* Univerſal Inviſible Church. *The Article deſcribes thoſe* outward Acts, *which are neceſſary to make a Viſible Church; and I deſcribe that* inward Sincerity, *and Regard to Chriſt himſelf, which make Men Members of the Inviſible Church of Chriſt. And where is the* Contradiction *contained in all this* *?

Suppoſe, my Lord, any one ſhould affirm that there is a *Sincere, Inviſible* Biſhop of *Bangor*, who is the *only true* Biſhop of *Bangor* in the *Mouth of a Chriſtian*. Would your Lordſhip think here was no Reflection intended upon your ſelf? Would you think this Account no *Contradiction* to your *Right* as Biſhop of *Bangor?* Does your Lordſhip believe ſuch an Aſſertion could come from any one that owned your Right to your *Biſhoprick*, and was a Friend to you in it? Would you imagine that nothing was meant againſt you, becauſe the other Biſhop was

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 79.

ſaid to be *Inviſible?* Your Lordſhip cannot but know, that though he is ſaid to be Inviſible, yet if he is the *only true Biſhop of* Bangor *in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, then *any* other Biſhop of *Bangor*, whether *Viſible* or *Inviſible*, muſt be a *falſe one in the Mouth of a Chriſtian.*

Thus it is your Lordſhip has dealt with the *Viſible* Church; you have ſet another up as the *only true Church*, and yet think all is well: that there is no Contradiction, becauſe you call this other an *Inviſible Church*, whereas if it be the only true Church, it contradicts every other Church in the higheſt Senſe. And though it does not contradict it as a *Viſible* Church, yet it does as a *True* Church, which is of more Conſequence.

Your Lordſhip here puts a Queſtion in favour of the *Viſible* Church. *Can it be ſuppoſed by this learned Body, that a Man's being of the Inviſible Church of Chriſt, is inconſiſtent with his joining himſelf with any Viſible Church* ?*

No, my Lord, it cannot be ſuppoſed It cannot be ſuppoſed by any Body that *a Man's being of the Inviſible Church*, is inconſiſtent with his joining himſelf to the *Royal Society*, or *College of Phyſicians.* But pray, my Lord, is this all that your Inviſible Church will allow of? Dare your Lordſhip proceed no farther, than only to grant that it is *no*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 79.

Incon-

Inconſiſtency, no Contradiction for a Member of your *Inviſible* Church to join with any *Viſible* Church? If you would *ſincerely* ſhew that you have ſaid nothing to the Prejudice of the *Viſible* Church, you ought to declare that the Members of your *Inviſible* Church, may not only *conſiſtently* join with that which is Viſible, but that it is their *Duty*, and that they are *obliged* to join with it in order to be of yours that is *Inviſible*. For if you have ſet up an *Inviſible* Church, which will excuſe its Members from being of any that is Viſible, then you have plainly deſtroyed it, by making it uſeleſs. And it is but a poor Apology for it to ſay, there is no *Inconſiſtency* in joining with it, after you have made it needleſs and unneceſſary to join with it. And it will be pretty difficult to give a *conſiſtent* Reaſon, why any Perſon ſhould join himſelf to a needleſs Church.

Your Lordſhip has here made great Diſcoveries of the Nature of your *Inviſible* Church, which appears to have nothing *viſible* or *external* in it.

For firſt, you declare that the Article deſcribes one Church, and you another. But how does this appear? How does your Lordſhip prove this? 1ſt. *Becauſe the Article declares what it is that makes every ſuch Congregation the* Viſible *Church* *. Now, my

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 70.

Lord,

Lord, if this ſhews that the Article does not deſcribe your Church, then it is plain that the Article here deſcribes *ſomething* that does not belong to your Church; for if it *equally* belonged to your Church, it could be no *Proof* that it did not deſcribe your Church. But you expreſsly ſay that it deſcribes a different Church from yours; therefore it muſt deſcribe *ſomething* that does not belong to yours.

Now if that which makes any Congregation the Viſible Church, be not neceſſary to make Perſons Members of your Church, it follows that they may be Members of yours, without being of *any Viſible* Church.

Again; Another Reaſon why the Article does not deſcribe your Inviſible Church is this; Becauſe it deſcribes *thoſe outward Acts, which are neceſſary to make a Viſible Church.* Theſe outward Acts are, the *Preaching the pure Word of God, and adminiſtring the Sacraments.* Now, my Lord, ſeeing theſe *outward Acts* ſhew that the Church here deſcribed is not your *Inviſible Church*, does not this evidently declare that ſuch outward Acts are not neceſſary to your Church? For if they did equally belong to both Churches, and were alike neceſſary to them, how could they more deſcribe one than another? But you ſay, it is the mentioning of theſe *outward Acts*, that ſhews that your *Inviſible Church* is not deſcribed; therefore it is plain, that you do not include theſe *outward*

Acts

Acts as essential to your Invisible Church, and consequently it is a Church to which neither *public Worship*, nor *visible Sacraments are necessary*. For if these outward Acts are necessary to your *Invisible* Church, why does not your Lordship mention them as such? You own *you describe what it is that makes every particular Man a Member of the Invisible Church*; yet you not only take no notice *of these outward Acts*, but say that the Article describes not your Church, because it mentions *these outward Acts*, which is a *Demonstration*, that these *outward Acts do not belong to your Church*.

Farther; When the *Learned Committee* had charged your Lordship with the Omission of *preaching the Word and administring of the Sacraments*, you answer, *they might have added, He omits likewise the very publick Profession of Christianity. And is not the Reason plain? because I was not speaking of the* Visible *Church*; *to which* alone, *as such*, visible outward Signs, *and verbal Professions belong: but of the Universal* Invisible *Church* *.

My Lord, the Reason is very plain, and it is as plain that is not a good Reason. For if the *preaching* of the Word, the *administring* of the Sacraments, and the publick Profession of Christianity, be necessary to

* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 80.

make

make any one a Member of *your Invisible Church*, then there was as good Reason to mention them in your Description, as if you had been describing the Visible Church.

If they are not necessary, then you have set up a Church *exclusive* of the Visible Church. The Case stands thus; If these outward Acts be as necessary to make Persons be of the *Invisible* as of the *Visible Church*, then they ought to come equally into the Description of both Churches, being equally necessary to both: If you say they are not equally necessary, then you must allow that there is no Necessity that the Members of your Church should be in *any external* Communion.

It is therefore no Apology, to say that you describe the *Invisible* Church, unless you will say that a Man may be of it, without *any outward Acts*, or *Communion* with *any Visible* Church. If a Person may be of this *Invisible* Church without having any thing to do with Visible Sacraments, or Worship in a Visible Communion, then you have an Excuse, why you did not mention these *outward Professions* in your Description of the Church; but if he cannot be of this Invisible Communion without observing these *outward Ordinances*, then it was as necessary to mention these *outward Ordinances* in your Account of this Church, as if you had been describing a Church, which consisted of nothing else but outward Ordinances. So

So that the ſhort of the Caſe is this; If the Obſervation of external Ordinances be not neceſſary to make Men Members of your *Inviſible Church*, then indeed there is a plain Reaſon why your Lordſhip ſhould omit them; and it is alſo plain, that this Doctrine ſets aſide the Goſpel, if this *Inviſible Church*, the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, be excuſed from *Goſpel* Ordinances. But if theſe external Ordinances be neceſſary to conſtitute the Inviſible Church, then there was as plain a Reaſon to mention them, in the Deſcription of your Church, as if you had been deſcribing the *Viſible Church*.

So that if your Lordſhip will give a good plain Reaſon why you have omitted theſe *outward Acts*, it muſt be becauſe they do not belong to it; for otherwiſe the calling it Inviſible is no Excuſe, unleſs it has no occaſion for ſuch *outward* Performances.

And indeed this has appeared to be your Doctrine in almoſt every Page, that you ſet up this *Inviſible* Church in Oppoſition to *Outward and Viſible* Ordinances. For you all along ſet out the Oppoſition or Difference betwixt the Viſible and Inviſible Church in reſpect to external Ordinances: Thus the one is Viſible, *becauſe to it alone belong external Signs, or verbal Profeſſions* *. The other is Inviſible for the *want* of *theſe*. Yet

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 81.

this

this Invisible Church thus destitute, and even necessarily destitute of external Ordinances, is by you called, the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Christian.*

One may, I acknowledge, easily conceive in one's Mind a Number of People, whose Internal and Invisible Graces may intitle them to the Favour of God; and these may be called an *Invisible Number*, or *Congregation*, or *Church*, because it is Invisible to us where it is, or how great it is. But then, my Lord, it is a great Mistake if this Invisible Church is opposed to, or distinguished from the *Visible Church* in respect of *external Ordinances*. For in these things they are both *equally* obliged to be Visible. And the Invisible Church is not so called, in *Contradistinction* to those who attend *Visible* Communions, and observe external Ordinances, but in *Contradistinction* to those who are *invisibly bad*, and are not what their external Profession promises. This is the only *Number* of People or *Church*, which the *Invisible* Church is opposed to. For as the Invisible Church intends a Number so called, because of their *Invisible* Graces; so this Invisibly good Church can be *truly* opposed only to the *Invisibly* bad Church, or such as are not such Persons *inwardly*, as they profess to be *outwardly*.

But, contrary to this, your Lordship has all along considered and described this *Invisible* Church in Opposition to the *Visible*, and made

made thoſe outward Acts which are *neceſſary* to the Viſible Church, ſo many *Marks* to diſtinguiſh it from that which is Inviſible. Thus you ſay, *that you was not ſpeaking of the Viſible Church, to which alone, as ſuch, viſible outward Signs, or verbal Profeſſions belong: but of the Univerſal Inviſible Church* *.

Here you plainly make *external Signs*, and *outward Profeſſions*, diſtinguiſh the Viſible from the Inviſible Church; whereas it is not *Inviſible* in this reſpect, as being *without* theſe *external* Profeſſions, or in *Contradiſtinction* to a *Viſible* Church; but it is only Inviſible in thoſe Graces, which human Eyes cannot perceive. Thus they are ſaid to be the Inviſible Church, becauſe they are a Number of Men, who are ſuch *inwardly*, as they profeſs to be *outwardly*. But this ſhews, that they cannot be ſo called in *Contradiſtinction* to *outward* Profeſſions, ſince they muſt have an *outward* Profeſſion themſelves before they can be inwardly *ſincere* in it; and conſequently they are not oppoſed to, or diſtinguiſhed from a Number of *outward Profeſſors*, for this they are obliged to be themſelves, but from a Number of outward Profeſſors, who are *not ſincere* in what they *outwardly* profeſs.

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 81.

If

If I ſhould deſcribe *charitable* Men to be an *Inviſible Church* of Perſons *ſincerely* well affected to Mankind, and this in Contradiſtinction to others who are *externally* charitable, and perform *outward* Acts of Love; or if I ſhould deſcribe *chaſte* Men to be an *Inviſible Church* of Perſons *inwardly chaſte* and pure, and this in Contradiſtinction to others *externally chaſte* and *viſibly* pure as to *outward Acts*; I ſhould juſt have the ſame Authority either from Reaſon or Scripture to ſet up theſe *Inviſible* Churches of *charitable* and *chaſte* Men, in Oppoſition to Perſons *outwardly* charitable and chaſte, as your Lordſhip has to ſet up this inviſible ſincere Church, in *Contradiſtinction* to the viſible external Church. For, firſt, this *Sincerity* no more makes a *Church*, than *Charity* and *Chaſtity* make a Church, or than *Honeſty* makes a Man a *Member* of a Corporation, or an *Officer* in the Army; theſe, being private perſonal Virtues, do not conſtitue a *Church* or *Society*, but concern Men, as Men, in every Eſtate of Life.

Secondly, *Outward* Ordinances and *Viſible* Profeſſions, are as neceſſary to make Men true Chriſtians, as *outward* Acts of Love and external Purity are neceſſary to make Men *charitable* or *chaſte* For Chriſtianity as truly implies *external Acts* and *Profeſſions*, as Chaſtity implies *outward* Purity.

Now,

Now, my Lord, ſuppoſe the Queſtion was, whether *Adultery* or *Fornication* or any other Impurity was lawful, and that the World was divided upon this Controverſy; Would he not be an excellent Preacher of Chaſtity, that ſhould never tell us whether any or all of theſe were unlawful, but ſhould pretend to decide the Controverſy, by telling the World, that *chaſte* Men, are an *Inviſible* Church of Perſons *inwardly pure*, and this in *Contradiſtinction* to Perſons *externally* pure? Suppoſe he ſhould tell them, that their Title to Chaſtity did not depend upon their being or not being of the Number of any *outwardly* pure or impure Perſons, but upon their *inward* Purity; What Apology could even Charity itſelf make for ſuch a Teacher?

The Controverſy on foot is this; Whether external Communion with any ſort of Fanaticks be lawful? Whether it be as ſafe to be in one external viſible Communion as in another? The World is divided upon this Subject; and your Lordſhip comes in to end the Controverſy. But how? Is it by examining the Merits of the contending Parties? Is it by telling us what is right and what is wrong in the different Communions? Is it by telling us that one external Communion is better than another? Is it by ſhewing us that any is dangerous? Is it by directing us, with which we ought to join, or indeed that we ought ſo much as to join with any? No:

This right and wrong, or good and bad in *external* Communions, though it was the *whole Queſtion*, is wholly ſkipt over by your Lordſhip; and you preach up an *Inviſible Church* as the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, and this in *Contradiſtinction* to all *Viſible* Churches: And only declare, that our Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon our being or continuing in any particular Method, but upon our *Sincerity*.

Your Lordſhip ſays; *I have laid down a Deſcription of the* Univerſal Inviſible Church *or Kingdom of Chriſt* *. Your Lordſhip had been as well employed if you had been painting of *Spirits*, or weighing of *Thoughts*. *The main Queſtion*, you ſay, *is whether this Deſcription be true and juſt* †.

This, my Lord, is not the *main Queſtion*; nor indeed does it concern us at all whether your Lordſhip is ingenious, or not, in this Deſcription.

For ſuppoſe your Lordſhip had been deſcribing an *Inviſible King* to the People of *Great Britain*, do you think the *main Queſtion* amongſt the *Lords* and *Commons* would be, whether you had hit off the Deſcription well? No, my Lord, the *main Queſtion* would be, To what Ends and Purpoſes you had ſet up ſuch a King, and what Relation the Subjects of *Great Britain* had to him;

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* P. 78. † *Ibid.*

whether

whether they might leave their *Visible*, and pay only an *internal Allegiance* to your *Invisible King?* If your Lordship should farther describe him as the *only true King in the Mouth of a* Britain, I believe it would be thought but a *poor Apology* to appeal to your fine Painting, that you had described him *justly*, and set him out as *Invisible*. The Application is here very easy; it is a very trifling Question, and only concerns your Lordship's *Parts*, Whether your Description of your Invisible Church be just or not? But it is the Use and the End of setting up this Church, which is any Matter of Question to us. Your Lordship might erect as many Churches as you please, if you did it only for *speculative Amusement*, and to try your Abilities in fine Drawing; but if you pretend to unsettle the Christian Church, by your new Buildings, or to destroy the Distinction between the *Church* and *Conventicle*, by your *Invisibles*, we must beg your Lordship's Excuse, and can no more admire the *Beauty* or *Justness* of your fine Descriptions, than you would admire a *just Description* of an *Invisible Diocese*, if it was set out in order to receive your Lordship.

You add; But *of this* (Description) they *(the Committee)* have not said one word; *but rather chosen to* go off *to an article of the Church of* England, which defines not the *Universal Invisible Church*. And your

Lordſhip might as well obſerve, that they have not ſaid one word about *Plato*'s *Republick*. For how they ſhould imagine that you was deſcribing an *Inviſible* Church, or if they did, why they ſhould trouble their Heads with ſuch a Deſcription, is not eaſily conceived.

For, my Lord, if it was your primary Intention only to appear in Defence of an *Univerſal Inviſible Church*, what can we conceive in our Minds more ſurprizing? What can be more extraordinary, than that a Viſible Biſhop at a *Viſible* Court, ſhould with ſo much Solemnity preach in Defence of a Church which can neither be defended nor injured? Are there any Rights in your Inviſible Church which can poſſibly be loſt? If not, to what purpoſe does your Lordſhip come in as a Defender? Can the Sight of any Men find it, the Malice of any Men attack it, or the Good-will of any Men ſupport it? No: Yet though it is as inviſible as the *Center* of the Earth, and as much out of our reach as the *Stars*, yet your Lordſhip has very pathetically preached a Sermon, and publiſhed ſome Volumes, leſt this Inviſible Church, which no body knows where to find, ſhould be run away with.

Should the ſame Chriſtian Zeal induce your Lordſhip to appear, at ſome other ſolemn Occaſion, in the Cauſe of the *Winds*, your Pains would be as well employed; for it would be as

as reaſonable to deſire that they might *riſe* and *blow* where they liſt, as that an Inviſible Church, no where to be known or found by us at preſent, may not be injured.

If therefore the *Learned Committee* had ſo far forgot that Viſible Church of which they are Members, as to have engaged with your Lordſhip about your *Inviſible Church*, the Diſpute would have been to as much purpoſe, as a *Tryal* in *Weſtminſter-Hall* about the *Philoſopher*'s *Stone*.

But you complain that they rather choſe to *go off* to an Article of the Church of *England*. My Lord, this is very hard indeed, that they ſhould *go off* to the Church of *England*, when you had an *Inviſible Church* ready for them; or that this Learned Body cannot diſpute about Churches, but they muſt needs bring the *Church of England* into the Queſtion.

Suppoſe, as in the above-mentioned Inſtance, your Lordſhip ſhould lay down a *fine* and *juſt* Deſcription of your *Inviſible* King of *Great Britain*, a Number of Tories ſhould, inſtead of examining the Truth of your Deſcription, *go off* to the *Act of Settlement*, which declares a *Viſible* King of *Britain*: This would be to uſe your Lordſhip juſt as the *Learned Committee* have done; who, inſtead of dwelling upon the Beauty and Juſtneſs of this Deſcription, have *gone off* to an old Article in the *Church of England*, which indeed only deſcribes an old-faſhioned *Viſible*

Church, as Churches went in the Apoſtles Days: That is, a *Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly adminiſtred* *.

I am of Opinion, that the *Apoſtolical* Church would not have thought themſelves too *Inviſible* to be thus deſcribed, or that this was too *Viſible* a Deſcription of the Church of Chriſt to take in its *ſincere* Members.

Whether therefore your Lordſhip has given a true Deſcription of the *Inviſible* Church, that is, a Church of *Thoughts* and *Sentiments*, I ſhall not conſider, but thus much I muſt obſerve, that it is a very falſe Deſcription; firſt, as it pretends to deſcribe THE Church †, *and the only true Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian.* For the Church of Chriſt, as has been ſhewn, is as truly a *Viſible external* Society, as any Civil or Secular Society in the World: And it is no more diſtinguiſhed from ſuch Societies by the *Inviſibility*, than by the *Youth* or *Age* of its Members.

The holy conſecrated *Elements* differ from common *Bread* and *Wine*, but they do not ſo differ from it, as to ceaſe to be as *Viſible*, as common Bread and Wine. Thus the Holy Catholick Church, the Kingdom of Chriſt,

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* *Artic.* 19. † *Anſw. to Repr.* p 70.

differs

differs from worldly Societies and Kingdoms, but not in point of *Viſibility*, but in regard to the *Ends* and *Purpoſes* for which it is erected, *viz.* the eternal Salvation of Mankind.

Secondly, This Deſcription contradicts the nineteenth Article of the *Church of England*. For though it is not ſet up as another *Viſible* Church, ſo as to contradict it in point of *Viſibility*, yet ſeeing it is deſcribed as THE Church, and *the only true Church*, it plainly contradicts it in point of Truth; for if it be the only true Church, every other muſt be a falſe one.

Thirdly, This Deſcription is a mere *ſpeculative Conjecture*, a *Creature* of the Imagination, which can ſerve no Purpoſes, but is entirely foreign to the preſent Diſpute, and muſt be ſo to any Diſpute which ever can ariſe between contending Communions. It no more ſerves to inform any one, whether he ſhould go to the *Viſible* Church or *Viſible* Conventicle, than whether he ſhould ſtudy the *Law* or *Phyſick*. It may indeed ſerve to make Perſons regardleſs of any *Viſible Church*, but can be of no uſe to them, if they deſire to know with what *Viſible* Church they ought to join.

It may now be worth our while to obſerve, how your Lordſhip came by this Account of Chriſt's Kingdom, which you ſay is the *only true* one. *Jeſus anſwered, my Kingdom is*

not of this World, is the Text to your Sermon. You say, *you have chosen these Words in which our Lord declares the Nature of his Kingdom* *.

Now, my Lord, one would imagine, that you hereby mean, that our Lord has in *these* Words declared what his Kingdom is; for without this, it cannot be true that he hath declared the *Nature of his Kingdom.* Whereas it is so far from being true, that he hath in *these Words* declared what his Kingdom is, that he has only, and that in one particular Respect, declared *what it is not.* If he had said that his Kingdom was not a *Jewish* Kingdom, would this be declaring the Nature of his Kingdom? If a Person should say that his Belief was not the Belief of the Church of *England*, would he in *these Words declare the Nature of his Belief?* Would it not still be uncertain whether he was an *Arian* or *Socinian*, or something different from them both? Thus our Saviour's saying that his *Kingdom is not of this World*, no more declares the Nature of his Kingdom, than a Person by saying *such* a one was not his Son, would in *these Words* declare how many Children he had.

My Kingdom is not of this World, are very indeterminate Words, and capable of several Meanings, if we consider them in them-

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* *Serm.* p. 10.

selves.

ſelves. But as ſoon as we conſider them as an Anſwer to a particular Queſtion, they take one determinate Senſe. The Queſtion was, whether our Saviour was the (Temporal) *King of the Jews? Jeſus anſwered, my Kingdom is not of this World.* Now as theſe Words may ſignify no more than the Denial of what was aſked; as there is nothing in them that neceſſarily implies more, than that he was not a King as the *Jewiſh* or other Temporal Kings are; as the Queſtion extends the Anſwer no farther than this Meaning; ſo if we enlarge it, or fix any other Meaning to it, it is all human Reaſoning, without any Warrant from the Text.

Now, taking the Words in this Senſe, what a ſtrange Concluſion is this that your Lordſhip draws from it: That becauſe Chriſt ſaid his Kingdom was not a Temporal Kingdom as the *Jewiſh* and other Kingdoms were; therefore his Kingdom is *Inviſible.* Is it denied to be a Temporal Kingdom, *becauſe a* Temporal Kingdom is Viſible? If not, it will by no means follow, that it muſt be *Inviſible*, becauſe it is ſaid not to be Temporal. Muſt it be in every reſpect contrary to a Temporal Kingdom, becauſe it is ſaid not to be Temporal? Then it muſt have no Subjects, becauſe in Temporal Kingdoms there are Subjects; then there muſt be no King, becauſe in ſuch Kingdoms there are Kings. I ſuppoſe the Sacraments may in a very proper Senſe be

ſaid

ſaid to be not *Temporal Inſtitutions*, though they are as external and *Viſible* as any thing in the World; and conſequently the Church may be not Temporal in a very proper Senſe, without implying that it muſt therefore be *Inviſible*. Indeed I cannot conceive how your Lordſhip could have thought of a more odd Concluſion, than this which you have drawn from them. If you had concluded that becauſe Chriſt's Kingdom is not a Temporal Kingdom, therefore its Members are all of of an Age; it had been as well as to ſay, therefore they are *Inviſible*.

Nothing can be more ſurprizing, than to ſee your Lordſhip throughout your whole Sermon deſcribing this Kingdom, with all the Accuracy and Exactneſs imaginable, and even *demonſtrating* every particular Circumſtance of its Nature, from this little *Negative*, *that it is not a Temporal Kingdom*. Your Lordſhip muſt be very excellent at taking a *Hint*, or you could never have found out this *Kingdom* of God ſo exactly from ſo ſmall a Circumſtance. It ſeems, had this *little Text* been all the Scripture that we had left in the World, your Lordſhip could have revealed the reſt by the help of it. For there is nothing that relates to this Kingdom, or the Circumſtances of its Members, but you have purely by the Strength of your Genius, unaſſiſted by any other Scripture, proved and demonſtrated from this ſingle Paſſage.

If a Foreigner ſhould tell your Lordſhip, that his Houſe in his own Country was not as the Houſes are in this Kingdom, would it not be very wonderful in your Lordſhip, to be able to *demonſtrate* its Length and Breadth, to tell how many Rooms there are on a Floor, and to deſcribe every Beauty and Convenience of the Structure, merely from having been told that it was not like the Houſes in this Kingdom? But it would not be more wonderful, than to ſee your Lordſhip deſcribe the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, and explain every Circumſtance that concerns its Members, from having been told this Negative Circumſtance. Nor indeed is it much to be wondered, ſeeing you ſet out upon this bottom, if you give as falſe an Account of Chriſt's Kingdom, as you would do of an Houſe, that you only knew what it was not.

Again, you ſay, *As the Church of Chriſt is the Kingdom of Chriſt, he himſelf is King*; *and* in this *it is implyed that he is himſelf the ſole Law-giver to his Subjects, and himſelf the ſole Judge of their Behaviour* in the Affairs of Conſcience and Salvation *.

What a pretty fine-ſpun Conſequence is this, to be drawn from the above mentioned Text. Your Lordſhip here advances a mere human Speculation founded upon no other Authority, than the uncertain Signification

* *Serm.* p. 11.

of

of the Words, *King* and *Kingdom*; you ſay it is *in this implied that* becauſe *Chriſt is King* of his *Kingdom*, *he is the ſole Law-giver to his Subjects*. Pray, my Lord, why is it *in this* implied? Do the Words, *King* and *Kingdom* always imply the *ſame* thing? Has a King in one Kingdom the *ſame* Powers, which every King hath in another Kingdom? Has the King of *England* the ſame Power, which a King of *France*, or any Sovereign hath in his Kingdom? Would it be any reaſon why the King of *England* ſhould be *ſole* Law-giver to his Subjects, becauſe there are Kings who are ſole Law-givers to their Subjects? Now if the word, *King*, does not neceſſarily imply the *ſame* Power in every Kingdom, how can there be any Concluſion, that *becauſe* Chriſt is King of his Kingdom, he is ſole Law-giver to his Subjects? Yet your Lordſhip's whole Argument is founded upon this weak and falſe bottom, that the word, *King*, is to be taken in one abſolute and fixed Senſe: For you expreſsly ſay, it is *in this* implied, that *becauſe* he is King, he is ſole Law-giver. Now it is impoſſible it ſhould be implied *in this*, unleſs the word, *King*, always implies the ſame Power: For if there be any Difference in the Conſtitutions of Kingdoms, though they all have Kings, then it is plain nothing certain as to the Nature and Condition of any Kingdom, can be drawn from its having a King. But your Lordſhip has deſcribed

deſcribed the Conſtitution of Chriſt's Kingdom, the Circumſtances of its Subjects, and in ſhort every thing that can concern it, as abſolutely, and with as much Certainty, from Chriſt's being King of it, as if the word, *King*, had but one Meaning, or every King the ſame Power.

Again, you tell us; *The groſſeſt Miſtakes in Judgment, about the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom or Church, have ariſen from hence, that Men have argued from other Viſible Societies, and other Viſible Kingdoms of this World, to what ought to be Viſible and Senſible in his Kingdom.*

Is it thus, my Lord? Are all our groſs Errors owing to this way of Reaſoning? How then comes your Lordſhip to fall into this groſſeſt of Errors? How come you to ſtate the very Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom from the Conſideration of Temporal Kingdoms, or *Abſolute* Monarchies? How come you to argue from the Relation between a King and his Kingdom, to what ought to be in Chriſt's ſpiritual Kingdom? Are not Kings and Kingdoms Temporal Inſtitutions? Is not the Relation betwixt a King and his Kingdom a Temporal Relation? How then can you argue from theſe Temporal Kingdoms, to any thing concerning Chriſt's Kingdom? Why will your Lordſhip fall into ſo groſs an Error, as to aſſert that Chriſt muſt be *ſole* Law-giver to his Subjects,

Subjects, because there are some Temporal *Kings* who are sole Law-givers to their Subjects? Is there any Consequence in this Argument? Nay, are not all our Errors owing to this mistaken way of arguing?

The only way to know the Constitution of this Kingdom, is not to reason from what is implied in the Words *King* and *Kingdom*, for they do not imply *any fixed, or absolute* Sense, but from the Laws and Institutions of it, whether they admit of or require the Authority of under Magistrates. Thus, if it appears that Christ has commissioned others to act in his Name, to exercise Authority in his Kingdom, and govern his Subjects in such a manner as he has commissioned them to govern; Is it any Answer to this, to say, that *the Church is a Kingdom, and Christ is a King, and consequently sole Law-giver in it?* Is there nothing in this Text, *What soever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven*, &c. because Christ is King of his Church?

The whole Scheme of all your Doctrines is raised out of this single Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*; which certainly implies no more, than if Christ had said, *I am not the Temporal King of the Jews.* Let us therefore see how your Lordship's Doctrines appear, if we bring them to the Principle from whence you had them: As thus,

thus, *Jeſus is not the Temporal King of the Jews*, therefore there is no ſuch thing as Church-Authority, no Obligation to join in any particular Communion. *Jeſus* is not the Temporal King of the *Jews*, therefore *Abſolutions*, *Benedictions*, and *Excommunications* are *Dreams* and *Trifles*; therefore no Succeſſion or Order of Clergy is better than another.

Jeſus is not the Temporal King of the *Jews*, therefore the *Inviſible Church* is the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*; therefore Sincerity alone, excluſive of any particular Communion, is the *only Title* to God's Favour. Now if the Papiſts ſhould ſay, *Jeſus is not* the *Temporal King* of the *Jews*, therefore there is a *Purgatory*, therefore we are to pray to *Saints*; they would ſhew as much true *Logick* and *Divinity*, as your Lordſhip has ſhewn in the Proof of your Doctrines from the above-mentioned Text. And I dare ſay, that every Reader of this Controverſy knows, that you have not pretended to any other Proof from the Scriptures for your Doctrine, than what your Oratory could draw from this ſingle Text.

This therefore, I hope, every Reader will obſerve, that all which you have advanced againſt the Univerſally Received Doctrines of Chriſtianity, is only an *Harangue* upon this ſingle Text, which every one's common Senſe will tell him, contains nothing in it that can poſſibly

poſſibly determine the Cauſe, which you are engaged in. For who can imagine, that it is as well to be a ſincere *Turk* as a ſincere *Chriſtian*, or that a ſincere *Quaker* is as much in the Favour of God as a ſincere *Churchman*, *becauſe* our bleſſed Lord told *Pilate*, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*; and that in ſuch a manner, and upon ſuch an occaſion, as only to imply that he was not that King which he enquired after? Who can conceive that there is no particular Order of the Clergy neceſſary, no Neceſſiety of any particular Communion, no Authority in any Church, nor any Significancy in the ſacerdotal Powers, for this reaſon, becauſe there is a Text in Scripture, which denies that Chriſt was the *Temporal King of the Jews*.

Your Lordſhip has ſaid much of the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel, and of its peculiar Fitneſs to be judged of, by the ordinary common Senſe of Mankind; you have alſo interpoſed in this Controverſy, to deliver them from the Authority of the Church, and turn them looſe to the Scriptures. But, my Lord, if this Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*, which ſeems to common Senſe to contain only the Denial of a particular Queſtion, contains, as you have pretended, the whole Chriſtian Religion; and every other ſeemingly plain Part of the Goſpel is to take its Meaning from this Paſſage; if it be thus, my Lord, what can we conceive more myſte-

myſterious than the Scripture? Or more unequal to the common, ordinary Senſe of Men?

For how ſhould it come into a plain honeſt Man's Head, that this Text, which is nothing but the *Denial* of a *certain Queſtion*, ſhould be the *Key* to all the reſt of Scripture? How ſhould he know that the plaineſt Texts in Scripture were not to be underſtood in their apparent Meaning, but in ſome Senſe or other given them from this Text? Thus, when it is ſaid, *Go ye and diſciple all Nations; and lo I am with you to the end of the World:* The firſt apparent Senſe of theſe Words is this, that as Chriſt promiſed to be with the Apoſtles in the Execution of their Office, both as to *Authority* and *Power*, ſo he promiſes the ſame to their Succeſſors, the Biſhops, ſince he could no otherwiſe be with them to the End of the World, than by being with their Succeſſors. Now, my Lord, how ſhould an ordinary Thinker know that this plain Meaning of the Words was to be neglected, and that he was to go to the above-mentioned Text, to learn to underſtand, or rather diſbelieve them? For what is there in this Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*, to ſhew either that Chriſt did not authorize the Apoſtles to ordain Succeſſors, who ſhould have his Authority, or that the Biſhops alone, are not ſuch Succeſſors? Is there any thing in this Text which can any way deter-

mine the Nature, the Neceſſity, or the Significancy of ſuch a Succeſſion?

Again it is ſaid, that *There is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they may be ſaved but Jeſus Chriſt.* Now how ſhould a Man that has only common Senſe imagine, that he muſt reject this plain Meaning of the Words, and believe that a *ſincere Turk* is as much in the Favour of God as a *ſincere Chriſtian*, for this only reaſon, becauſe *Chriſt's Kingdom is not of this World?* It muſt not be common ordinary Senſe which can reaſon and diſcover at this rate.

Laſtly, it is ſaid, *Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven*, &c. Now how ſhall any one that has only *ſober* Senſe find out, that there is nothing at all left in this Text, that it only gave *ſomething or other to the Apoſtles*, but gives no Authority to any Perſons now, becauſe the *Kingdom of Chriſt is not of this World.*

Our Saviour told his Diſciples, that *they were not of this World*, but is that an Argument that they therefore became immediately inviſible? Was neither St. *Peter*, nor St. *Paul*, &c. ever to be ſeen afterwards? Why then muſt the Kingdom of Chriſt become immediately inviſible, becauſe it is ſaid not to be of this World, any more than its firſt Members were Inviſible, who were alſo declared to *be not of this World?*

Had

Had St. *Peter* or St. *Paul* no visible Power and Authority over the Presbyters and Deacons, because *they were not of this World?* If they had, why may not some Persons have Authority over others in Christ's Kingdom, though *it is not of this World?*

For our blessed Lord's saying that his Disciples *were not of this World*, does as strictly prove that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* had no distinct Powers from Presbyters and Deacons, as his saying, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*, proves that there is no real or necessary Difference betwixt Bishops and Presbyters in his Kingdom. And it is as good Logick, to say the Disciples of Christ were not of this World, therefore there was no Necessity, that some should have been *Apostles*, and others *Presbyters*, &c. as to say Christ's Kingdom is not of this World, therefore there is no Necessity that some should be Bishops and others Presbyters in it.

I have been the more particular in examining the Text to your Sermon, and bringing your Doctrines close to it, that every Reader who has common Sense, may be able to perceive that they have no more Relation to that Text from which you would be thought to have them, than if you had deduced them from the first Verse in the first Chapter of *Genesis*.

And yet thus much every Reader must have observed, that it is your Explication of

this Text alone, which has led you to condemn all that Authority, to cenſure all thoſe Inſtitutions as *Dreams* and *Trifles*, which the holy Scriptures, and the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity, have taught us to eſteem as ſacred in themſelves, being ordained by God; and of the greateſt Benefit to us, being means of obtaining his Grace, and Favour.

Thus far concerning the Nature of Chriſt's Church.

Of Church Authority.

I Come now to conſider what your Lordſhip has delivered upon the Article of *Church Authority*, as it is inveſted in the Governours of the Church. And here I have little elſe to do, but to clear it from thoſe *falſe Characters*, under which you have been pleaſed to deſcribe it.

Thus you begin; *If there be an Authority in any to judge, cenſure, or puniſh the Servants of another Maſter, in Matters purely relating to Conſcience and eternal Salvation; then Chriſt has left behind Judges over the Conſciences and Religion of his People; then the Conſciences and Religion of his People are ſubject to them whom he has left Judges*

Judges over them; and then there is a Right in some Christians to determine the Religion and Consciences of others. And what is more, if the Decisions of any Men can be made to concern or affect the State of Christ's Subjects with regard to the Favour of God, then the Salvation of some Christians depends upon the Sentence passed by others *.

Here is the Sum of what you have advanced from *Reason* and the *Nature* of the Thing against the Authority of Church Governours; which you would have pass for a strict Proof, that if they have any Authority in *Matters purely* relating to *Conscience* derived to them from Christ, that then their Authority can *damn* or *save* at pleasure.

But, my Lord, in this *same strict* way of Reasoning, and by only using your own Words, I will as plainly prove that a *Father* hath not Authority even to send his Children of an *Errand*.

For, " If the Christian Religion authorises " a *Father* to judge the Servants of another " Master in *Matters purely* relating to *Mo-* " *tion*, then Christ has left behind him " Judges *over* the *Motion* of his People, " then the *Motion* of his People is subjected " to *them* whom he has left Judges over *it*; " and then there is a *Right* in some *Christians*

* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 27.

" to determine the *Motion* of others. And " what is more, if the *Determinations* of " any Men can concern or affect the State " of Chriſt's Subjects with regard to *Motion*, " then the Lives of ſome Chriſtians depend " upon the Determination paſſed by others; " becauſe they may determine them to move " from the *top* of a Precipice to the *bottom*.

Here, my Lord, I freely leave it to the Judgment of *common Senſe*, whether I have not in your *own Words* proved it as abſurd and unreaſonable, that a *Father* ſhould have any Power over his Son, ſo as to ſend him of an *Errand*, as to allow the Church to have Authority in Matters of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*; and the Conſequence, according to your Argument, is *equally* dreadful in both Caſes: For it is as plain that if *Fathers* have Authority in Matters of *Motion*, then they may *move* their Sons to the *bottom* of a *Precipice*; as that if the *Church* hath Authority in *Matters of Salvation*, then it may *ſave* or *damn* at pleaſure; and it is as well proved, that *Fathers* have no Authority in Matters of *Motion*, becauſe they have no Authority to command their Children to *deſtroy* themſelves, as that the Church hath no Authority in Matters of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*, becauſe they have not an Authority to *damn* People for ever: For there is the ſame room for *Degrees* in the Authority of the Church, which there is for *Degrees* in the Authority

of

of *Parents*; and it is as juſtly concluded that *Parents* have no Authority in Matters of any *particular Nature*, becauſe they have not *unlimited* Authority in things of that *particular Nature*, as that the *Church* hath no Authority in *Matters of Conſcience and Salvation*, becauſe it has not an abſolute unlimited Authority in *theſe Matters*.

Yet this is the whole of your Argument againſt *Church Authority*, that it cannot relate to Matters of Conſcience and Salvation, becauſe an Authority in *theſe Matters*, is an *abſolute Authority* over the Souls of others; which is juſt as true, as if any one ſhould declare that a *Father* hath no Authority in *Matters* purely relating to the *Body* of his Son, becauſe an *Authority* in *theſe* Matters, is an *abſolute* Authority to diſpoſe of his *Body* as he pleaſes.

Suppoſe it ſhould be ſaid, that a *Father* hath Authority over his Son in *Civil Affairs*; Will it be an Argument that he has no ſuch Authority, becauſe he has not *all*, or an *unlimited* Authority in *Civil Affairs?* Will it be an Argument that he has no Authority in *ſuch Matters*, becauſe his Son it not *wholly* and *entirely* ſubjected to him in ſuch Matters? Has a Father no Right to chuſe an *Employment* for his Son, or govern him in ſeveral things of a *Civil Nature*, becauſe he cannot oblige him to reſign his *Title* to his *Eſtate*, or take from him the Benefit of the *Laws* of the *Land?*

If he has an Authority in theſe Matters, though not *all*, why cannot the Governours of the Church have an Authority in *Matters of Conſcience*, though they have not *all*, or an *unlimited* Authority in Matters of Conſcience? How does it follow that they have no ſuch Authority, becauſe Chriſtians are not *wholly* and *abſolutely* ſubjected to them in *ſuch* Matters? Why can there not be *Bounds* to an Authority in *Matters of Conſcience*, as well as *Bounds* to an Authority in *Civil Affairs?* And if a *Father* may have Authority over his *Son* in *Civil Affairs*, though that Authority is limited by the *Laws* of the Land, and the ſuperior Authority of the *Civil Magiſtrate*; why may not the Church have an Authority in *Matters of Conſcience* and Salvation, though that Authority is *limited* by the *Scriptures*, and the ſupreme *Authority* of God?

He therefore who concludes the Church hath no Authority in Matters of *Salvation*, becauſe it cannot *abſolutely* ſave or damn People, reaſons as *ſtrictly*, as he who concludes a Perſon has *no Authority* in *Civil Affairs*, becauſe he cannot grant or take away *Civil Privileges* of the *higheſt* Nature.

What therefore your Lordſhip has thus *logically* advanced againſt the *Authority* of the Church, concludes with the *ſame Force* againſt *all* Authority in the World. For if the Church hath no Authority in Matters of Conſcience,

ſcience, for this *demonſtrative Reaſon*, becauſe it hath not an *unlimited* Authority in *Matters of Conſcience*; then it is alſo *demonſtrated* that no Perſons have any Authority in *any particular* Matters, becauſe they have not an *abſolute unbounded Authority* in thoſe *particular Matters*.

As thus; A *Prince* hath no Authority to oblige his Subjects to make *War* againſt *ſuch* a People, becauſe he hath not an *unlimited* Authority to oblige his Subjects to fight *where*, and *when*, and with *whom* he pleaſes.

A *Father* hath no Authority over the *Perſons* or *Affairs* of his *Children*, becauſe he cannot diſpoſe of the *Perſons* and *Affairs* of his Children in what manner he will.

Maſters have no Authority to command the *Aſſiſtance* of their *Servants*, becauſe they cannot oblige them to *aſſiſt* in a *Rebellion* or *Robbery*.

Thus are all theſe *particular Authorities*, as plainly confuted by your *Argument*, as the Authority of the Church is confuted by it.

But now, my Lord, have neither *Maſters*, nor *Fathers*, nor *Princes*, any Authority in theſe *particular* Matters, becauſe they have no Authority to command at *any rate*, or as they pleaſe in theſe Matters? If they have, why may not the Governours of the *Church* have an Authority in *Matters of Conſcience*, though they cannot oblige Conſcience at *any rate*,

rate, or as they pleaſe? Why may not they have an Authority in Matters of Salvation, though they have not Power abſolutely to damn or ſave?

Your Lordſhip would therefore have done as much Juſtice to Truth, and as much Service to the World, if, inſtead of calling Chriſtians from the Authority of the *Church*, you had publickly declared that neither *Maſters*, nor *Fathers*, nor *Princes*, have, *properly ſpeaking*, any *real* Authority over their reſpective *Servants*, *Sons*, and *Subjects*, and that becauſe they are none of them to be obeyed but in *ſuch* and *ſuch* Circumſtances, and upon certain ſuppoſed Conditions. For you have plainly declared there is no Authority in the Church, that it has no Power of obliging, becauſe we are only to obey upon *Terms* and *certain ſuppoſed Conditions*. If therefore this *conditional* Obedience proves that there is, *properly ſpeaking*, no *Authority* in the Church, then that conditional Obedience of *Servants*, *Sons*, and *Subjects*, proves that neither their *Maſters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, *have* any Authority *properly ſpeaking*.

You ſay; *If there be a Power in ſome* OVER *others in Matters of Religion, ſo as to determine theſe others; then all Communions are upon an equal foot, without any regard to any intrinſick Goodneſs; or whether they be right or wrong; then no Religion is in itſelf preferable to another,*

ther, but all are alike with reſpect to the Favour of God *.

Now, my Lord, all this might, with as much Truth, be ſaid of any other Authority, as of Church Authority.

As thus; " If there be a *Power* in the " *Prince*, or in *ſome* over others in *Matters* " *of War and Fighting*, ſo as to determine " thoſe others; then all *Wars* and *Fightings* " are upon an *equal* foot, without any re- " gard to any intrinſick Goodneſs; or whe- " ther they be *right* or *wrong*; then no " *Wars* or *Fightings* are in themſelves pre- " ferable to others, but all are alike with re- " ſpect to the Favour of God.

And now, my Lord, what muſt we ſay here? Has the Prince no *Right* or *Power* to command his Subjects to wage War with ſuch a People? Or if he has this Power over them, does this make *all* Wars *alike?* Does this Authority leave nothing to the *Juſtice* or *Equity* of *Wars*, but make all Wars *exactly* the ſame with regard to the *Favour* of God?

Does this Authority of the *Prince* make all *Engagements* equally lawful to the Subject that engages by his Authority? Is he neither *more* or *leſs* in the Favour of God, for whatever Cauſe he fights in, becauſe he has the Authority of his Prince? Is it as pleaſing to

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 114.

God

God that under ſuch Authority he ſhould make War upon the *Innocent*, plunder and ravage the *Fatherleſs* and *Widows*, as engage in the Cauſe of *Equity* and *Honour?*

Now, my Lord, if *all Wars* are not alike to the Perſons who are concerned in them, *as to the Favour of God*; if there can be *any Caſes* ſuppoſed, where it is not only *lawful*, but *honourable* and *glorious* for Soldiers to diſobey the *Orders* of their *Prince*; then it is paſt doubt, that Soldiers *may* and *ought* to have ſome regard to the *Nature* and *Juſtice* of the *Orders* they have from their Prince.

But we have your Lordſhip's Aſſurance, that if they may have *any* regard to the *Nature* and *Juſtice* of their *Orders*, then *there is an end of all Authority*, and an *end of all Power of one Man over another in ſuch Matters.*

So that you have as plainly confuted *all Authority* of the *Prince* over his Soldiers in *Matters purely* Military, as you have confuted all Authority of the *Church* in *Matters purely* of Conſcience. For it is plain to every Underſtanding, that if there is an end of all Authority in Religion, becauſe Perſons may have ſome regard to the *intrinſick Goodneſs of things**, that therefore there is an end of all *Regal Authority* over Soldiers, if Soldiers may have any regard to the *Na-*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 115.

ture

ture and *Juſtice* of their *Military Orders.*

Your Argument againſt Church Authority conſiſts of two Parts; the *firſt Part* is taken from the *Nature* of *Authority*, and proceeds thus: *If there be an Authority in Matters of Conſcience, it muſt be an abſolute Authority over Conſcience, ſo as to be obeyed in all its Commands of what kind ſoever*; which is as falſe as if it were ſaid, that if a Father hath Authority over the *Perſon* of his Son, then he hath an *abſolute* Authority to do what he will with his *Perſon*; or if he hath Authority over his Son in *Civil Affairs*, then he hath an *abſolute unlimited* Authority in the *Civil Affairs* of his Son.

The *other Part* of your Argument, is taken from the *Nature* of *Obedience*, and proceeds in this manner: *If Perſons may have ſome regard to the intrinſick Goodneſs of things* in Religion, then there is an end of *all Authority* in Matters of Religion; which is as falſe as to ſay, that if a *Soldier* may have *ſome regard* to the *Nature* and *Juſtice* of the *Military Orders* of his *Prince*, then there is an end of all Authority of the *Prince* over his Soldiers in *Military Affairs*; or if a Servant may have *ſome regard* to the *Lawfulneſs* of the *Commands* of his Maſter, then there is an end of *all Authority* of Maſters over their Servants as to ſuch Matters.

So

So that if there be any such thing as Authority either in *Masters*, or *Fathers*, or *Princes*, then *both Parts* of your Argument are confuted; for none of these have any other than a *limited* Authority, nor do their respective *Servants*, *Sons*, or *Subjects*, owe them any other *active* Obedience, but such as is *conditional*.

Now if it can be any way proved that *Obedience* to our *Masters*, *Parents*, and *Princes* is a very great *Duty*, and *Disobedience* a very great *Sin*; though they cannot oblige us to act against the Laws of God, or the Laws of our *Country*; then it will follow that *Obedience* to our *Spiritual* Governours may be a very great *Duty*, and Disobedience a very great *Sin*; though they cannot oblige us to submit to their *sinful* or *unlawful* Commands.

And if *common* Reason, the *Laws* of God, and our *Country* be sufficient to direct us, where to *stop* in our *active* Obedience to our *Masters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, though they have Authority from God to demand our Obedience; the *same Guides* will with the *same Certainty* teach us where to *stop* in our Obedience to the Authority of the Church, though that Authority be set over us by God himself.

Though this might be thought sufficient to shew the Weakness of your Arguments against the Authority of the Church, yet I shall

ſhall beg leave to examine them a little farther in another manner.

You ſay the Authority which you deny, is only an *Authority in Matters relating purely to Conſcience and eternal Salvation*, an Authority whoſe Laws and *Deciſions affect the State of Chriſt's* Subjects with regard to the Favour of God; and the reaſon of your denying it is this, that if this Authority, or *Laws*, or *Deciſions of Men can concern or affect the State of Chriſt's Subjects with regard to the Favour of God, then the eternal Salvation of ſome Chriſtians depends upon the Sentence paſſed by others* *.

In order to lay open the Weakneſs of this Reaſoning, I ſhall ſtate the Meaning of the Propoſitions of which it conſiſts.

And, firſt, I ſuppoſe an Authority may be properly ſaid to affect the *State* of People with regard to the *Favour* of God, when their *Obedience* to ſuch an Authority procures his Favour, and their *Contempt* of it raiſes his diſpleaſure; and I believe that this is not only a proper Senſe, but the *only* proper Senſe which the Words are capable of.

It is certainly true that the Authority of our bleſſed Saviour, was an Authority which *affected* the *State* of the *Jews* with regard to the *Favour* of God; but yet it no other-

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 28.

wiſe

wiſe affected their State, than as their Obedience to his Authority was pleaſing to God, and their Diſobedience to it, the Cauſe of his farther Diſpleaſure. This is the *only* way in which the Authority of Chriſt affected the *State* of People with regard to the Favour of God; and therefore is the *only* manner in which any other Authority can be ſuppoſed to affect Perſons with regard to the Favour of God.

Secondly; Any *Things* or *Matters* may be properly ſaid to relate to *Conſcience* and *eternal Salvation*, when the Obſervance of them is a *Means* of obtaing Salvation, and the Neglect of them, an *Hindrance* to our Salvation. Thus *Baptiſm* and the *Supper* of the Lord, are Matters relating to *Conſcience* and eternal *Salvation*, but then they are only ſo, for this reaſon, becauſe the partaking of theſe Sacraments, is a *Means* of obtaining Salvation, and the Refuſal of them, is an *Hindrance* of our Salvation. He therefore who hath Authority in *ſuch things*, as by our obſerving of them we promote our Salvation, and by our neglecting of them, we hinder our Salvation, he has in the utmoſt Propriety of the Words, an *Authority in Matters of Conſcience and Salvation*.

Hence it appears that it is not peculiar or appropriate to the Authority of the Church *alone*, to relate to Matters of Conſcience and eternal Salvation, but *equally* belongs to every other

other Authority which can be called the *Ordinance* of God.

Now all lawful Authority, whether of *Maſters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, is the *Ordinance* of God, and the reſpective Duties of their *Servants*, *Children*, and *Subjects*, are as truly Matters of *Conſcience* and eternal *Salvation*, as their Obſervance of any Part of the Chriſtian Religion is a Matter of *Conſcience* and eternal *Salvation:* And it is not more their Duty to receive the *Sacrament*, or worſhip God in any particular manner, than to obey their reſpective Governours; nor does it more *concern* or *affect their State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, whether they neglect *thoſe Duties* which particularly regard his *Service*, or *thoſe Duties* which they owe to their *proper* Governours. So that *Conſcience* and eternal Salvation are *equally* concerned in *both* Caſes.

For *things* may as well be Matters of *Conſcience* and eternal *Salvation*, though they are of a Civil or Secular Nature, as the *poſitive Inſtitutions* of Chriſt are Matters of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*.

For *Baptiſm* has no more of Religion in its *own Nature*, nor has of *itſelf* any more concern with our Salvation, than any Action that is merely *Secular* or *Civil*. But as Baptiſm by *Inſtitution* becomes our *Duty*, and ſo is a Matter of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*; ſo when Actions merely *Secular* and *Indifferent*,

 are

are by a *Lawful* Authority made our *Duty*, they are as truly Matters of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*, as any Parts of Religion.

The Difference betwixt a *Spiritual* and *Temporal* Authority does not conſiſt *in this*, that one relates to Matters of *Conſcience* and Salvation, and *concerns* and *affects* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, and the other does not; but the Difference is this, that *one* preſides over us in things relating to Religion and the *Service* of God, the *other* preſides over us in things relating to *Civil Life*; and as our Salvation depends as *certainly* upon our Behaviour in things relating to *Civil Life*, as in things relating to the *Service* of God, it follows that they are *both equally Matters* of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*: And as the *Temporal* Authority is the *Ordinance* of God, to which we are to ſubmit, not only *for Wrath*, but alſo for *Conſcience ſake*, it undeniably follows, that this *Temporal* Authority as *truly concerns* and *affects* our State with regard to the *Favour* of God, as any Authority in Matters *purely* relating to Religion. For ſuch an Authority could in *no other* Senſe *affect* our State with regard to the *Favour* of God, than by our Obedience or Diſobedience to it; but our State with regard to the Favour of God is as *truly affected* by our *Obedience*, or *Diſobedience* to our Lawful Sovereign, as by our obſerving or neglecting any Duty in the World;

World; and consequently the *Temporal* Authority as *truly affects* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, as any Authority in Matters of Religion.

Seeing therefore, by an Authority in Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, by an Authority which can *affect* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, nothing more is implied, than an Authority to which our Obedience is a *Duty*, and our Disobedience a *Sin*, which is the Case of every Lawful Authority; it plainly appears, that all those *frightful* Consequences, those *Dangers* to the Souls of Men which you have charged upon such *Church Authority*, are as truly chargeable upon *Masters*, *Fathers*, and *Princes*, and make their several Authorities as dangerous Powers over the Salvation of others, as the Authority of the Church.

Thus, when your *Demonstration* proceeds in this manner; *If there be an Authority in some over others in Matters* purely *relating to Conscience and Salvation, then the Salvation of some People will depend upon others.* Which, if we set it in a true Light, ought to proceed thus; *If there be an Authority in Matters of Religion, to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Disobedience a Sin, then the Salvation of some People depends upon others.*

But, my Lord, what a Sagacity must he have who can see this dismal Consequence?

Who can ſee that *Maſters*, *Fathers*, and *Princes*, have a Power over the Souls *of others* either to *damn* or *ſave* them, becauſe Obedience to their Authority is a *Duty*, and Diſobedience a *Sin?*

Your Lordſhip cannot here ſay, that *an Authority* in *Matters purely relating to Conſcience* and *eternal Salvation*, is not expreſſed *high* enough, by being deſcribed as an *Authority to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Diſobedience a Sin.* For, my Lord, no Authority, however concerned in things of the greateſt Importance in *Religion* and *Salvation*, can poſſibly be an Authority of an *higher* Nature, than that *Authority to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Diſobedience a Sin.* It was in this *Senſe alone*, that the Authority of our *Saviour* himſelf *affected* the State of the *Jews* with regard to the *Favour* of God; his Authority was of an *high* and *concerning* Nature to them only for this Reaſon, becauſe their Obedience to it was their Duty, and their Diſobedience their Sin.

If we now conſider this Authority in the Church, in this true Manner in which it ought to be conſidered, your Lordſhip's Argument againſt it, either proves a deal too much, or nothing at all.

Thus, if the Conſequence be juſt, that if it be Sin to diſobey the Church, then the Church hath a Power of damning us; then it

it is as good a Conſequence in regard to other Authority; as thus, *It is a Sin to diſobey our Parents, therefore our Parents have a Power of damning us*; it is a Sin to diſobey our *Prince*, therefore *our Prince has a Power of damning us.* Theſe Conſequences are evidently as *juſt* and *true*, as that other drawn from Church Authority; ſo that all thoſe *diſmal Charges* which you have fixed upon *Church Authority*, are as falſe Accounts of it, as if you had aſſerted that every *Father*, or *Maſter*, or *Prince*, who demands Obedience from his *Child*, *Servant*, or *Subject*, in point of *Duty*, or by declaring that their Diſobedience is a *Sin*, does thereby prove himſelf to be a *Pope*, and to have the Souls of others at his Diſpoſal. For it is out of all doubt, that if the *Governours* of the Church by demanding Obedience to them in point of *Duty*, or by declaring Diſobedience to be *Sin*, do thereby aſſert the Claims of *Popery*, and aſſume a Power to diſpoſe of the Souls of the People; that any other Authority which requires this Obedience as a *Duty* of Conſcience, and forbids Diſobedience as *Sin*, does thereby claim the Authority of the *Pope*, and pretend to a Power over the Souls of others.

So that if your Lordſhip has deſtroyed Church Authority, which pretends Obedience to be a *Duty*, as a *Popiſh Claim*; you have alſo as *certainly* deſtroyed every other Au-

thority which demands Obedience as a *Duty*, as being equally a *Popiſh Preſumption*.

Whenever therefore you ſhall pleaſe to call away *Servants*, *Children*, or *Subjects* from their reſpective *Maſters*, *Fathers*, and *Princes*, you have as many *Demonſtrations* ready to prove them *all Papiſts*, if they will ſtick by their Obedience to them as a *Duty of Conſcience*, and to prove their Governours *all Popes*, if they declare their Diſobedience to be *Sin*, as you have to prove Church Authority to be a *Popiſh Claim*. And I muſt beg leave to affirm, that they are as much miſled who follow your Lordſhip againſt the Authority of the Church, as if they ſhould follow you in the *ſame Argument* againſt owning any Authority of their *Parents* and *Princes*.

The Intent of all this is only to ſhew, that though there is an Authority in the Church, to which our Obedience is a *Duty* and our Diſobedience a *Sin* (which is as high an Authority as can be claimed) yet this Authority implies no more a *frightful* Power of *diſpoſing* of our Souls, than any other Lawful Authority, which it is a *Sin* to diſobey, implies ſuch a Power.

For where is the Danger to our Souls? How is our Salvation made ſubject to the Pleaſure of our Church Governours, becauſe God has appointed them to direct us in the manner of worſhipping him, and to preſide over things relating to Religion, and made it

our

our Duty to obey them? How does this imply a dangerous Power over our Salvation? If we ſin againſt this Authority, we endanger our Salvation as we do by neglecting *any other Ordinance* of God; and our Damnation is no more affected by any *Power* in the Perſons, whom we may be damned for diſobeying, than a Perſon that is *damned* for *killing* his Father, is damned by any *Power* of his *Father*'s.

Neither is it in the Power of the Governours in the Church, though they have Authority in Matters of Salvation, to make our Salvation any more difficult to us, than if they had no *ſuch* Authority.

For all their Injunctions muſt be either *Lawful*, or *Unlawful*; if they are *Lawful*, then by our Obedience to an *Ordinance* of God, we recommend our ſelves to the Favour of God; and ſure there is no harm in this Authority thus far. And if their Commands are *Unlawful*, then by our not obeying them, we ſtill pleaſe God, in chuſing rather to obey him than Men, where *both cannot* be obeyed. And where, my Lord, is the Terror of this Authority ſo much complained of? How does this make our Salvation lie at the Mercy of our *Church Governours?* We are ſtill as truly ſaved or damned by our own Behaviour, as though they had no *ſuch Authority* over us; and though we may make their Authority the *Occaſion* of our Damnation, by

our rebelling againſt it, yet it is only in ſuch a manner as any one may make *Baptiſm*, or the *Supper* of the Lord, the *Occaſion* of his Damnation, by a prophane Refuſal of them.

Upon the whole of this Matter, it appears, Firſt, that when the Authority of the Church is ſaid to be an *Authority* in *Matters* of *Conſcience and Salvation*, or an Authority which *concerns* and *affects our State* with *regard to the* Favour of God; that this is the only true Meaning of thoſe Propoſitions, *viz.* an *Authority in Matters of Religion, to which Obedience is a Duty, and Diſobedience a Sin.*

Secondly, That this Authority to which we are *thus obliged*, is as conſiſtent with our working out our own Salvation, and no more puts our Souls into the Diſpoſal of ſuch Authority, then our Salvation is at the Mercy of our *Parents* and *Princes*, becauſe to obey their Authority is a *great Duty*, and to diſobey it, a *great Sin.*

Your Lordſhip has yet another Argument againſt *Church Authority*, taken from the Nature of our Reformation, which it ſeems cannot be defended, if there was then this *Church Authority* we have been pleading for.

Thus you ſay; *If there be a Church Authority, I beg to know, how can the Reformation itſelf be juſtified* *.

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 117.

My

My Lord, I cannot but wonder this ſhould be a Difficulty with your Lordſhip, who has writ ſo *famous* a Treatiſe to inform People, *how* they not only *may*, but *ought* in point of *Duty* to get rid of a *real* Authority; I mean in your Defence of *Reſiſtance*.

I ſuppoſe it is taken for granted, that *James* the Second was King of *England*, that he had a *Regal* Authority over all the People of *England*, and that they all of what Station ſoever were his *Subjects*; yet granting this *Regal* Authority in him, and this State of *Subjection* in all the People of *England*, your Lordſhip *knows how to ſet aſide* that Government, and ſet up another Government; and even to make it our *Duty* as *Men* and *Proteſtants* to ſet up another Government.

Now ſince you know how to get rid of this Authority in ſo *Chriſtian* and *Proteſtant* a manner, one cannot but wonder how you ſhould be at a loſs to juſtify the *Reformation*, without ſuppoſing that the Church at *that time* had no Authority.

For did you ever juſtify the *Revolution*, becauſe *James* the Second had no *Kingly Authority*, or that the People of *England* were not his *Subjects?* Nay, did you not defend it upon the quite contrary Suppoſition, that though *James* the Second had a *Regal* Authority, though all the People of *England* were his *Subjects*, and had ſwore to be his *faithful* Subjects,

Subjects, yet in spight of all these Considerations, did you not assert that they not only *might*, but *ought* to set him aside and chuse another Governour in his stead?

And yet after all this, you *know not how* to defend the *Reformation*, it is a perfectly lost Cause, and not a word to be said for it, unless we suppose that there was no *Authority* in the Church when we *reformed* from it. Surely if your Lordship loved to defend the *Reformation*, as well as you loved to defend the *Revolution*, you would not have so *many* Reasons for one, and *none* for the other.

For supposing an Authority in the Church, will not *Tyranny*, *Breach* of *Fundamentals*, and *unlawful Terms* of Communion, defend our Departure from a *real* Authority in the Church, as well as any *Grievances* or *Oppressions* will defend our leaving a *real* Authority in the State?

What a *pitiful* Advocate, what a *Betrayer* of the *Rights* of the People would you reckon him, who should say, *If there was any Regal Authority in* James *the Second, if the People of* England *were his* Subjects; *I beg to know, how can the* Revolution *itself be justified?*

Yet just such an *Advocate* are you, just such a *Betrayer* of the *Reformation*, you cannot defend it, it has no bottom to stand upon; and if there was any *Authority* in the Church before the *Reformation*, *you beg to know*,

know, how the *Reformation itſelf can be juſtified?*

My Lord, I do not urge this to ſhew either that the *Revolution* and *Reformation* are equally juſtifiable, or that they both are to be juſtified upon the *ſame* Reaſons; but to ſhew that your Lordſhip from *your own Principles*, needed not to have wanted as good Reaſons for the *Reformation*, as you have produced for the *Revolution*, even ſuppoſing the Church of *Rome* had as *real* an Authority over us as *James* the Second had, and that we were as truly in a State of Subjection to that Church before the *Reformation*, as we were in a State of Subjection to that King before the *Revolution*.

Again, you proceed thus; *For there was then* (at the Time of the Reformation) *a* Church, *and an Order of* Church-men, *veſted with all ſuch ſpiritual Authority, as is of the Eſſence of the Church. There was therefore a* Church Authority *to* oblige *Chriſtians*; *and a Power in ſome* over *others. What was it therefore to which we owe this very* Church *of* England *?

Now, my Lord, I hope you will grant, that juſt at the Time of the *Revolution*, " there was then a *King*, veſted with all ſuch " Civil Authority as is of the Eſſence of a " *King*. There was therefore a *Regal Au-*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 118.

" *thority*

" *thority* to oblige the People of *England*,
" and a Power in one over others. What
" was it therefore to which we owe this very
" *Revolution* in *England?*"

I ſuppoſe you will ſay that we owe it, not to any *Want* of Authority in the late King *James*, but to his *Abuſe* of his Authority: Why therefore is it not as eaſy to account for the *Reformation*, not from the *Want*, but the *Abuſe* of Authority in the Church of *Rome?* Is it an Argument that the People of *England* were no *Subjects*, under no Government, nor had any *King*, becauſe they would no longer ſubmit to the *Oppreſſions* and *Grievances* of a late Reign, but aſſerted their *Liberties* and appealed to the Conditions of the *Original Contract?*

If not, why is it an Argument that the Church had *no Authority*, becauſe ſome Years ago the People of *England* would no longer ſubmit to the *Corruptions*, and *unlawful* Injunctions of the Church of *Rome*, but appealed to the *Scriptures*, and the Practice of the *firſt* and *pureſt* Ages of Chriſtianity?

If your Lordſhip was ſo entirely conſiſtent with your ſelf as you tell us you are; if you never purſued an Argument farther than the plain Reaſon of it led you; how is it poſſible that you, who have ſo ſtrenuouſly defended the *Reſiſtance* of People againſt a *Legal King**,

* *Sev. Tracts.* p. 332.

(for

(for ſo you expreſsly call him) ſhould declare that our Separation from the Church of *Rome* cannot be *juſtified*, without ſuppoſing that the Church of *Rome* had never any Authority over us?

For ſuppoſing that Church had been really our Sovereign in Affairs of Religion, is it not ſtrange that you, who have aſſerted that our *preſent Settlement is owing entirely to the taking up Arms, and adhering to ſuch as were in Arms againſt* their Sovereign *, ſhould yet declare that our oppoſing the Church of *Rome*, cannot be juſtified but by ſuppoſing, that ſhe never had any *Sovereignty* over us?

Is it not yet ſtranger, that you, who have defended the *Revolution* by comparing it to the *Reformation*, ſhould yet declare that the *Reformation* cannot be juſtified without ſuppoſing that the Church of *England* was under no Authority of the Church of *Rome?*

For, my Lord, if the Church of *England* had not been under the *Authority* of the Church of *Rome*, how could our *oppoſing* that Church be compared to the *reſiſting* of King *James?* How could our *Separation* from that Church be a Defence of our *withdrawing* our *Allegiance* from King *James*, without ſuppoſing that the Church before that *Separation*, had as *Real* and *Legal* Authority as that King had before the *Revolution?*

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* *Ibid.* p. 366.

Your

Your Words are these; *Why should that (i. e.* Resistance) *be absolutely and entirely condemned, as a damnable Sin, any more than* Church Separation, *by which we got rid of the* Tyranny *of* Rome? And again, *All Church* Reformation, *is not Church* Destruction; *Why therefore must* all Resistance *be called* Rebellion **?*

Now is it not very strange, my Lord, that after this, you should assert that the Church had *no Authority* before the *Reformation*; and that if it had any Authority, then our *Separation* from it cannot be *justified?* Is not this very strange, after you had used it as an Argument to justify the withdrawing of our Allegiance from King *James* the Second?

For let us suppose with you, that there was *no Church Authority* at the time of the *Reformation*, and then see how excellent an Argument you have found out in Defence of the *Revolution*, which, upon this Supposition, must proceed in this manner.

The Church of *England might* separate from the Church of *Rome*, who had *no Authority* over her; therefore the People of *England* might resist their *Legal* King, who had a Regal Authority over them. Again, The Clergy of *England*, who were *no Subjects* of the Church of *Rome*, *might* separate from that Church; therefore the People of

* *Serv. Tracts.* p. 334.

England,

England, who were *Subjects* to King *James* the Second, might withdraw their *Allegiance* from him.

Thus abſurd is your Argument made, by ſuppoſing that the Church had not as real and rightful an Authority before the *Reformation*, as *James* the Second had before the *Revolution*.

Farther; Let us ſuppoſe with your Lordſhip, that *if there was a real Authority in the Church at the time of the Reformation*, then the Reformation *has no bottom, but is altogether unjuſtifiable*; let us ſuppoſe that this Doctrine is true, and then ſee how *conſiſtently* you have argued upon this Suppoſition.

You ſay the *Reformation* cannot be juſtified; it has no *bottom* to ſtand upon, if the Church of *Rome* had a real Authority; yet this *Oppoſition*, which is ſo entirely *wrong*, becauſe an *Oppoſition* to Authority, is brought by you as a *parallel Caſe* to prove that the *Reſiſtance* againſt the *Authority* of King *James* was entirely *right*. This *Reformation*, which if it was brought about againſt any *Church Authority*, is ſaid to be for that *very Reaſon* without any *bottom*, and to have no *Foundation*, is uſed by your Lordſhip to point out the *true Bottom* and *firm Foundation* of the *Revolution*.

And here let all the World judge, whether *Reaſon* and *Religion* alone can induce any one

one to maintain the *Truth*, the *Juſtice*, the *Honour*, the *Chriſtianity* of the Revolution, as founded upon Reſiſtance to a Legal King; and yet condemn at the ſame time the *Reformation*, as having neither *Reaſon*, nor *Truth*, nor *Juſtice* to ſupport it, as founded upon a Departure from a real Authority in the Church of *Rome*. For *Reaſon* and *Religion* do as plainly give leave to depart from the *higheſt* Authority in the Church, when the Laws of God cannot be obſerved without departing from it, as in any other Caſe; and there is no more Neceſſity of ſuppoſing or proving that there was no rightful Authority in the Church, to juſtify our departing from it, than it is neceſſary to prove ſuch a Perſon not to be my *Father*, or to have no *Authority* over me, in order to juſtify my diſobeying his *unlawful Commands*.

Again, your Lordſhip is farther at a loſs about the *Reformation*, which cannot poſſibly be juſtified, if afterwards, an *Authority* in Matters of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*, be ſtill claimed.

Thus you ſay; *Nor can I ever underſtand, upon this bottom* (*viz.* the claiming ſuch Authority) *what it was that could* move *or* juſtify *thoſe, who broke off from the Tyranny of the Church of* Rome; *unleſs it be ſufficient to ſay, that it was only* that Power might change Hands *.

* *Anſw. to Retr.* p. 48.

Here

Here your Lordſhip cannot conceive any thing more unjuſtifiable than the *Reformation*, if *Church Authority* is ſtill to be kept up; nor can you upon this Claim aſſign any other Pretence for *reforming*, but *only* that Power might change Hands.

Did your Lordſhip then never hear of the *Juſtice* of removing one Authority, and ſetting up another? Can you think of no Caſe, where *Equity*, *Honour*, and *Duty*, called upon a People to *reſiſt* one Power, and yet make another to ſucceed?

Now if this Practice can be equitable and honourable, and is aſſerted to be ſo by your Lordſhip, can it be conceived, that *Reaſon alone* ſhould induce you to load the *Reformation* with ſo much *Guilt* and *Injuſtice*, to condemn it as ſo groundleſs an Undertaking; becauſe though it ſet aſide the *Tyrannical* Authority of the Church of *Rome*, yet it aſſerted a true Church Authority, and made Obedience to it neceſſary to obtain the Favour of God.

Suppoſe ſome Friend to the *Revolution*, after hearing that the *Prince* of *Orange* was proclaimed King, and a *Regal* Authority ſet up, ſhould then have ſaid in your Lordſhip's Words, *I can never underſtand, upon this bottom, what it was that could move or juſtify thoſe, who broke off from the Tyranny of the late King* James; *unleſs it was ſuffi-*

ficient to ſay, that it was only that Power might change Hands.

I appeal to your Lordſhip, whether any thing could be more *extravagant* and *ſenſeleſs*, than ſuch a Declaration as this from a Friend to the *Revolution*.

And I as freely appeal to the *common Senſe* of every one, whether your *own Declaration* expreſſed in the *ſame* Words with regard to the *Reformation*, ſets you out to any better Advantage in relation to that.

For it is full as good Senſe to ſay, where is the *Juſtice* of the *Revolution*, or what *Foundation* has it in the Reaſon of Things, if there is ſtill a *King* to be acknowledged, and a *Regal Authority* to be ſubmitted to? as to call out for the *Juſtice*, and *Equity*, and *Reaſon* of the *Reformation*, if there is ſtill a *Church Authority* which we are obliged to obey. And it is as certainly the *Shame* and *Reproach* and *Injuſtice* of the *Revolution*, that a Government and *Regal* Authority is ſtill maintained, as it is the *Shame*, and *Reproach*, and *Injuſtice* of the *Reformation*, that a Church *Authority* is ſtill aſſerted.

And there was no more Neceſſity in the Nature or Reaſon of the Thing, that the *Reformation* ſhould diſown all *Authority* properly ſo called, in Matters of *Religion*, than that the *Revolution* ſhould have rejected all Authority properly ſo called in *Civil Affairs*.

Neither

Neither does the *Reformation* any more contradict itſelf, or undermine its own Foundation, and give the *Papiſts* an Advantage over it, by claiming and aſſerting a *Church Authority*, than the *Revolution* contradicted itſelf, or conſpired its own Ruin, by ſetting up a *King*, and maintaining a *Government* in the State. And it had been juſt as *wiſe*, as *prudent*, and *politick* Management, if the *Revolution* had ſet up no Government, but left every Man to himſelf in *Civil Affairs*, in order to have prevented the Return of the late King *James*; as if the *Reformation* had maintained no Church Authority, but left every Perſon's Religion to himſelf, in order to keep out *Popery*. And it is juſt as much Matter of Joy and Triumph to the *Papiſts*, to ſee this Authority aſſerted in the Church of *England*, as it was Matter of Joy to the late King *James*, to find that a *Regal Authority* was ſet up againſt him.

But to go on; your Argument, when put in form, will proceed in this manner.

The Church of *England* departed from the Authority of the Church of *Rome*, therefore we may *lawfully* depart from any Church Authority. And again; at the *Reformation* we *lawfully* ſeparated from the *Communion* of the *Church* of *Rome*, therefore we may as *lawfully* ſeparate from any particular *Communion*.

And now, my Lord, can any Argument be more trifling, or draw more abſurd Conſequences after it, than this? And yet, abſurd as it is, it is one of your beſt, and which you ſeem to take great Delight in: Thus are we told in almoſt every Page, that if we will ſtand by the *Reaſon* and *Juſtice* of the *Reformation*, we muſt give up *all Authority* in Matters of Religion; and not pretend to a Neceſſity of being of any *particular* Church, if we would juſtify our leaving the *Romiſh* Church.

But pray, my Lord, you have told us, that the People of *England* of all *Stations* did *lawfully* and *honourably*, &c. reſiſt the late King *James*; but does it therefore follow, that they may as *lawfully* and *honourably* reſiſt King *George?* If not, how does it follow, that becauſe we might *juſtly* ſeparate from the Church of *Rome*, therefore others may as *juſtly* ſeparate from the Church of *England?*

Is it inconſiſtent with the Principles of the *Revolution* to declare Men *Rebels*, becauſe it was founded (as you affirm) upon Reſiſtance? If not, why muſt it be inconſiſtent with the Principles of the Church of *England*, to declare any People *Schiſmaticks*, becauſe ſhe ſeparated from the Church of *Rome?* Now if you will ſay that all who take *Arms* at *any* time againſt *any* King, are juſtified by thoſe, who took Arms againſt the late King *James*; then you would have ſome Pretence to make

our

our *Separation* from the Church of *Rome* a Juſtification of *every* other *Separation* in the World. But ſince you cannot ſay this, but have pretended to demonſtrate the contrary, that though ſometimes *Reſiſtance* is not *Rebellion*, yet ſometimes *Reſiſtance* certainly is *Rebellion*, you are particularly hard to the *Reformation*, to make it either unjuſtifiable in itſelf, or elſe to be a *Juſtification* of every other pretended *Reformation*.

But however, as hard as you are upon the *Reformation* in this Place, making it, conſidered as a *Separation*, a Defence of all other *Separations* from the Church of *England*; yet you your ſelf, to ſhew your equal regard to both ſides of a Contradiction, have aſſerted the contrary, and declared that as all *Reſiſtance is not Rebellion*, ſo neither *is all Separation Schiſm*.

Now, I ſuppoſe, when you ſay that *all Reſiſtance* is not *Rebellion*, it is certainly implied that *ſome Reſiſtance* may be *Rebellion*; and likewiſe by declaring in the *ſame* manner *all Separation* not to be *Schiſm*, it muſt as neceſſarily be implied that *ſome Separation* may be *Schiſm*. Here therefore you plainly teach us, that ſome *Separation* may be *Schiſm*, and ſome *Separation* may not be *Schiſm*; yet your preſent Argument is founded upon the contrary Suppoſition, that either all Separations are *Lawful*, or none

are *Lawful*; for it is the conſtant Complaint in every Chapter of your Book, that the Church of *England* ſhould aſſert any Neceſſity or Obligation upon others of conforming to her, when ſhe her ſelf denied the Neceſſity of her conforming to the Church of *Rome*. So that the *Lawfulneſs* or *Juſtice* of her *Separation* from *Rome*, is urged to ſhew the equal *Lawfulneſs* and *Juſtice* of all *Separations* from the Church of *England*; which Argument is plainly founded upon this Propoſition, that all Separations from any Churches, are either equally *Lawful*, or equally *Unlawful*. Which is directly contrary to this other Propoſition, that ſome Separation may be *Schiſm*, and ſome Separation may not be *Schiſm*. Which Contradiction is juſt as palpable, as if you had ſaid, all Reſiſtance is not the Sin of Rebellion; yet all Reſiſtance is either *equally* lawful, or *equally* unlawful.

But to go on, you ſay that *all* Reſiſtance is not Rebellion, and for a Proof of it, ſay, that all *Church Separation* is not *Schiſm*; which plainly implies, that there is *at leaſt* as much Difference betwixt ſome *Separations* from *different* Churches, as there is betwixt ſome armed *Reſiſtances* againſt *different* Kings. Now if, according to your Lordſhip, there is as much Difference betwixt *Reſiſtances*, as there is betwixt an Action that is a *Duty*, and an Action that is a *Sin*, and you have proved

proved this Difference, by comparing thoſe *Reſiſtances* to different ſorts of *Separations*, then it will neceſſarily follow that there may be, nay muſt be, as much Difference betwixt one *Separation* and another *Separation*, as there is betwixt one Action that is a *Duty*, and another Action that is a *Sin*. This being the true State of the Caſe, your Lordſhip's Argument in Defence of the *Separatiſts*, taken from our *Separation* from the Church of *Rome*, will ſtand thus.

We ſeparated from the Church of *Rome*, becauſe *ſuch Separation* was our *Duty*, therefore the *Fanatics* may ſeparate from the Church of *England*, though *ſuch Separation* is a *Sin:* Which is as rational an Argument, as if it ſhould be ſaid, ſuch a one killed a Man *lawfully*, therefore any one elſe may kill a Man *unlawfully*. For if ſome Separation may be a *Duty*, and ſome Separation a *Sin*, it is as falſe and ridiculous to infer, that if *our* Separation is juſt, it juſtifies *all other* Separations; as to conclude, that becauſe we may do our *Duty*, others may tranſgreſs their *Duty*. For there is manifeſtly, and from your own Acknowledgment, this great Difference between one Separation and another Separation, that one *Separation* in ſuch Circumſtances, will no more juſtify a Separation in other Circumſtances, than the Lawfulneſs of killing a Man in ſome Caſes, will prove it lawful to kill a Man in all other Caſes.

Now if your Lordſhip has any *Demonſtrations* ready, to ſhow that *Reſiſtance* in ſome Circumſtances is a *Chriſtian Duty*, and *Reſiſtance* in ſome other Circumſtances is a *damnable Sin*; and that it may be as great a Sin to reſiſt ſome Princes, as it is a Duty to reſiſt others; if you can help us to any plain Rule, any certain Signs to know an honeſt Chriſtian *Reſiſter*, from a *Reſiſter* who is a *Rebel* and in danger of *Damnation*; I hope there may be found as plain Rules to ſhew us who ſeparates *lawfully*, and who ſeparates *unlawfully* from any particular Church. If you can give any Reaſons why the late King *James* might be reſiſted *then*, and yet ſhow it a Sin to reſiſt King *George now*, it is ſomething ſtrange that you cannot find any Reaſons, why it was our *Duty* to ſeparate from the Church of *Rome then*, and yet ſhow it a *Sin* to ſeparate from the Church of *England now*.

For I would ſuppoſe at leaſt, that there is as much Difference between ſeparating from the Church of *England* and ſeparating from the Church of *Rome*, as there is betwixt Reſiſtance againſt a *good* King, and Reſiſtance againſt a *Tyrannical* Oppreſſor; and if there be this Difference, then you muſt allow, that it is as falſe to argue from the *Lawfulneſs* of ſeparating from one Church, to the *Lawfulneſs* of ſeparating from the other, as it would be to argue, that becauſe oppreſſive Tyrants may

may be reſiſted, therefore juſt and good Kings may be reſiſted. I have been the longer in examining this Doctrine, in this particular View in relation to *Reſiſtance*, that it may be ſeen with how much Truth you ſay, you have *recommended ſuch Principles as ſerve to eſtabliſh the Intereſt of our common Country and our common Chriſtianity, of human Society and true Religion, upon one* uniform, ſteady, and conſiſtent Foundation *.

For it is evident that theſe Principles, if put in Practice, directly tend to the utter Ruin of our common Country, and our common Chriſtianity; for I have ſhewn that all the Arguments which you have advanced againſt Church Authority, if they have any Force, conclude with the ſame Force againſt all ſorts of Authority in the World.

I ſhall now proceed to a moſt remarkable evaſive Denial of every thing you have ſaid relating to Church Authority, from your own Mouth.

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* *Pref. to Com. Rights of Subjects.*

A Re-

A Remarkable Evaſion of your Lordſhip's in relation to Church Authority.

THE *Learned Committee* charged your Lordſhip with *denying all Authority to the Church, and leaving it without any Authority to judge, cenſure, or puniſh Offenders in the Affairs of Conſcience and eternal Salvation* *. To ſupport this Charge, they quoted theſe Words of your Sermon; *Chriſt is ſole Law-giver to his Subjects, and himſelf ſole Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conſcience and Salvation; in theſe Points he hath left behind him no viſible human Authority.*

Now how is it that your Lordſhip has cleared your ſelf from this Charge? Why truly by declaring, that by a Denial of *all Church Authority*, you only meant to deny to the Governours of the Church a Power of paſſing the *irreverſible Sentence*, or that Chriſt has left no viſible Authority here to *judge* People at the laſt Day. When you talked ſo much of Church Authority in Matters of Religion, and of *an Authority left behind*, it was very reaſonable to think that

* *Repreſ.* p. 4.

you

you was ſpeaking of an Authority which related to the Church in this World. But it ſeems, all you have denied in relation to Church Authority, is only this, that any one but Chriſt ſhall *paſs the irreverſible Sentence*, or judge us at the laſt Day.

For you ſay; *As Chriſt is to paſs the irreverſible Sentence, thus he is judge alone.* And *what I affirm of him, I deny of others in the ſame Senſe in which I affirm it of him: And in no other Senſe can I be ſuppoſed to deny it, becauſe it anſwers no Purpoſe* *.

Therefore when you ſay no Men have any Authority in Affairs of *Religion* and *Conſcience*, you only ſay that no Men have Authority to paſs the *irreverſible Sentence* at the laſt Day. For you declare that thus it is that Chriſt alone is Judge, and you only deny that of others, which you affirm of him, and conſequently the only Authority which you deny them, is that of judging the World at the *laſt Day*.

Strange! my Lord, that after ſo many elaborate Pages for eccleſiaſtical Liberty, ſo many Complements received for your ſucceſsful Attacks upon *Church Authority*; that after all, you ſhould declare, that you have not ſo much as touched upon *Church Authority*, but have only been labouring to *demonſtrate*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 33.

that

that the *Judgment of the laſt Day is committed to Chriſt alone.*

Chriſt, you ſay, *is in no other Senſe Judge of the Behaviour of Chriſtians in theſe Points, than as their Condition muſt and will be determined by his* Sentence. *And when I deny this of Men, I do not, I cannot, mean to deny this of them in any other Senſe, but that in which I affirm it of Chriſt* *.

So that when you in plain Words ſeem to deny all Authority in the Church, as by ſaying, that *Chriſt alone is Judge of the Behaviour of Chriſtians, in Matters of Religion,* and that he left behind him *no viſible human Authority in theſe Points*; and ſuch like Phraſes, as ſeem to ordinary Underſtandings to deny all *Rule* and *Authority* in the Church; you only mean, that *no* one but Chriſt is to paſs the *Sentence* at the laſt Day. This is the *Key* your Lordſhip has given us to your Writings, which indeed gives them quite another Face, and makes them ſuch a Courſe of *Amuſements*, as exceeds all which have yet been ſeen in that kind; as will appear from the following Particulars.

Thus when you ſay, that *in the Affairs of Conſcience and Salvation, Chriſt hath left no viſible human Authority behind him.* The Meaning is this, that *Chriſt hath left no body behind him in this World, to paſs the*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 46.

irre-

irreverſible Sentence in the next World, i. e. hath left no one to do that *here*, which cannot be done till *hereafter*. This is the *ſublimeſt* Senſe which this Paſſage is capable of, from your own Conſtruction.

Again, you ſay, the *Church of Chriſt is the Number of Perſons who are ſincerely and willingly Subjects to him as their Lawgiver and Judge* * ; which according to this new *Key*, is to be thus underſtood ; The *Church of Chriſt is the Number of Perſons who will ſincerely and willingly ſubmit to the Sentence of Chriſt at the laſt Day*. For you ſay, we are to ſubmit to him as our Judge ; and you expreſsly ſay, he is *in no other Senſe judge of the Behaviour of Chriſtians*, than as he is to paſs the *irreverſible Sentence* ; therefore if we are to be *willingly* and *ſincerely* ſubject to him *as Judge*, our Obedience or Subjection to him as Judge, can be no otherwiſe expreſſed, than by our Submiſſion to his Sentence then pronounced.

So that this Definition comes at laſt to ſignify a Number of Perſons, who ſincerely and willingly ſubmit, ſome to be ſaved, and ſome to be damned at the laſt Day ; for this will be the Effect of Chriſt's Sentence as Judge.

This is as ſound Divinity, as if I ſhould define the Church of Chriſt, to be a *Number*

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* *Serm.* p. 25.

of

of Perſons, who ſincerely and willingly ſubmit, ſome to live, and ſome to die.

Again, you ſay, that *your Doctrines relating to the Authority of the Church*, is the very Foundation *on which the Church of* England *ſtands*; *and that they are ſo neceſſary for its continuance, that without them it is impoſſible to defend it's Cauſe againſt the* Roman *Catholicks.*

Now your Doctrine concerning Church Authority, you have over and over declared to be only this, *that Chriſt alone ſhall judge the World at the laſt Day.* For you expreſsly ſay, that you deny the Church an Authority of judging in *no other Senſe*, than in the Senſe in which you affirm it of Chriſt.

Now, my Lord, how comes this Doctrine to be the Support of the Church of *England?* How can it poſſibly have any relation to the Merits of the Cauſe? Does it follow that the *Pope* had no Legal Authority in *England*, that *Tranſubſtantiation* is falſe, that *Purgatory* is a groundleſs Fiction, and *Prayers* to Saints are unlawful, becauſe *Chriſt alone ſhall judge the World?* This is what you have affirmed of Chriſt, this is all which you have denied of Men; and this Doctrine it ſeems about *Church Authority*, as you are pleaſed to call it, is the *only Support* of the Church of *England*, and *the very Foundation on which it ſtands*,

A *Ro-*

A *Roman* Catholick tells me that *Tranſubſtantiation* is true; I anſwer him no, that cannot be, and that for this reaſon, becauſe no Order of Men ſhall judge us at the laſt Day; Chriſt alone ſhould do it. Could any thing be more extravagant, or more foreign to the Purpoſe, than ſuch an Anſwer as this to a *Roman* Catholick? And yet, according to your Account of the Matter, this is the only Anſwer which can be defended. For you have denied *no Authority* to the Church, but that which peculiarly belongs to Chriſt *as Judge at the laſt Day*; and yet you ſay that your Doctrine relating to Church Authority, is the very Foundation and Support of the *Reformation*.

Now if this Doctrine be our only Defence againſt the Church of *Rome*, and what alone ſupports us againſt that Church, then the *Preſbyterians*, the *Independents*, *Quakers*, and all ſorts of *Fanatics*, who own this Doctrine, that *Chriſt alone ſhall paſs the laſt Sentence*, are by it as well defended againſt the Church of *England*, as ſhe is againſt the Church of *Rome*; ſo that it makes us as much wrong in regard to the *Diſſenters*, as it makes us right in regard to the *Papiſts*; and though it ſhould give us *Victory* over the *Papiſts*, yet it makes us fall a Conqueſt to the *Fanatics*. For it is certainly as proper for a *Quaker* to reply to the *Church* of *England*, that his Reformation is juſtified againſt the

the Authority of the *Church* of *England*, becauſe Chriſt alone ſhall judge the World at the laſt Day; as for the Church of *England* to make that Anſwer to the Church of *Rome*.

Your Lordſhip ſays, for you to deny Church Authority in any other Senſe, *anſwers no Purpoſe*. Pray, my Lord, what Purpoſe does this manner of denying anſwer? Here is a Diſpute about Church Authority, and the Powers of Eccleſiaſtical Governours: Your Lordſhip interpoſes, and declares that no Men ſhall *paſs the irreverſible Sentence at the laſt Day*. To what Purpoſe, my Lord, is this Declaration? Does it ſtrike any Light into the Controverſy, or any way point out the Merits of the Cauſe? Does this inform us whether there is any ſuch thing as Church Authority, or where it is ſeated? If two *Families* were trying their Title to the ſame Eſtate, and the Judge ſhould pretend to determine the Matter, by ſaying that *God alone is ſole Proprietor of all Things*, it would be as much to the Purpoſe, as to tell us in the Controverſy about Church Authority, that *Chriſt alone ſhall judge the World*. Does this any way prove that there is no human Authority in the Church, or that Chriſtians are no way concerned with it? What an excellent Argument is this? *Chriſt alone* ſhall judge the World, therefore no Men have *any Authority* in Religion, therefore it can no way affect you with

with regard to the Favour of God, whether you ſubmit or not, to ſuch human Authority?

Whether your Lordſhip is forced upon this Method of explaining your ſelf, by any other Motives than thoſe of Sincerity and Conviction, is what I ſhall not preſume to ſay; but I believe, if a Perſon ſhould be called to account for ſaying the *King* had no Right to *create Peers*, and ſhould afterwards defend himſelf, by ſaying that he only meant he could not *create* in that Senſe, in which *God alone* could create; I am apt to think ſuch a Defence would be no great Recommendation of his Sincerity. But, my Lord, it would be as proper and as ingenuous for a Perſon ſo accuſed to make ſuch a Defence, or rather ſuch an Eſcape, as for your Lordſhip, after the moſt expreſs repeated Denials of *all Church Authority*, to declare that you only meant to exclude it from paſſing the *irreverſible Sentence* at the laſt Day. And the Nature of Church Authority is as much ſettled and determined by this Declaration, as the King's Power in his Kingdom, as to the Creation of *Peers*, is declared by ſaying that *God alone* can create.

For is it any Argument that no Perſons have any particular Authority to baptize others, to admit to the holy Sacrament, and exclude unworthy Perſons from it, becauſe they are not to judge the World at the laſt Day? Is it a

Proof that Biſhops have no Authority to ordain, to confirm; no Commiſſion from God to take care of Religious Matters, and ſee that all Things in the Divine Service be done decently and in order, becauſe Chriſt alone is to paſs Judgment upon all at the laſt Day? Does it follow that Men are under no Church Authority, but may chuſe any Government, or no Government as they pleaſe, becauſe Chriſt alone ſhall call the World to Judgment? There is as much Logick in ſaying that *Jeſus Chriſt* ſuffered under *Pontius Pilate*, therefore Biſhops have no more Authority than Lay-men; as to ſay they have no Authority in Religious Affairs, becauſe Chriſt is to judge the World.

Yet you ſay this was the only proper Senſe in which you could be ſuppoſed to deny it. Now, my Lord, I ſhould have thought it had been more to the Purpoſe, to have denied Church Authority in ſome ſuch Senſe, as it had been falſely claimed by ſome body or other, that it might have been ſaid that you had an Adverſary ſome where or other. But in this Matter, you have not ſo much as an Adverſary in this World; for no one pretends to be Judge, as Chriſt is Judge, or ſets up the *Authority* of the Church in Oppoſition to the laſt *Tribunal*; yet this is the *only manner* of Judging, the *only ſort* of Authority, which you ſay you have denied to others; therefore you have only denied that which

which was never claimed; you have only denied that which no more relates to *Church Authority*, than it relates to Church *Muſic*. The *Pope* himſelf neither pretends to paſs Sentence at the laſt Day, nor that his Judgments here will have any Effect in the next World, but conditionally, that is, *Clave non errante*. Now this is not a Senſe in which Chriſt alone is Judge, therefore it is not a Senſe in which you have denied it to others. So that notwithſtanding this long elaborate Treatiſe againſt Church Tyranny and Popiſh Claims, *Popery* itſelf is as ſafe and ſound as ever it was. For you have denied this Power of Judging in *no other Senſe*, than as you have affirmed it of Chriſt, as he is to paſs the laſt *irreverſible* Sentence at the Day of Judgment; but the *Pope* does not claim it in that Senſe, therefore the *Papal Power* is untouched by your Lordſhip.

Here I muſt obſerve, how your Lordſhip has evaded the great Points in Diſpute, both concerning the *Nature* of the Church, and Church Authority. When you was charged with deſcribing the Church contrary to *Scripture* and the *Article* in the Church of *England*; your Anſwer was, that you had only deſcribed the *Inviſible Church*; which was ſaying in other Words, that in a Diſpute amongſt *Viſible Churches*, and about Church-Communion, you deſcribed a Church which had no relation to the Matter, nor ever can have

to any Diſpute amongſt Chriſtians. This, my Lord, to ſpeak tenderly of it, may be called only an *Evaſion*.

Again, as to Church Authority, your Lordſhip has been charged with denying it all, and leaving it no right to judge or cenſure in the Affairs of Conſcience. Your Anſwer is this, that you have only denied that Chriſt has left any Men here to judge us at the laſt Day. That is, in a Controverſy about the *Exiſtence* of Church Authority, the *Extent* and *Obligation* of its Laws, you have only denied ſuch an Authority as no body claims, nor ever will be executed, till *all Viſible* Churches, and Diſputes about them, will be at an end, *viz.* at the Day of Judgment.

This, my Lord, is another Evaſion, and that in the very chief Point in Diſpute, where Sincerity ſhould have obliged you to have been open, clear, and expreſs. But no ſooner are you touched upon this Point, but you fly into the Clouds, and the very Diſſenters themſelves loſe ſight of you.

Thus when you had plainly ſaid, that *Chriſt hath left behind him no viſible human Authority in the Affairs of Conſcience*, the Diſſenters might juſtly think they had nothing to be charged with for their Diſobedience to Biſhops; they might well think that they were left to any Government, or no Government in Religion, as they pleaſed, ſince Chriſt had left *no viſible human Authority*; but then how

how muſt they be aſtoniſhed, my Lord, to find that your Aſſertion about Church Authority, does not at all relate to the Church in *this World*, but to the Exerciſe of a certain Authority in the *next World*, after all Churches on the Earth are at an end? To find that you have denied no Authority to any Men, but that which peculiarly belongs to Chriſt at the laſt Day? That is, that you denied no Authority which ever was claimed either by *Proteſtant* or *Popiſh* Churches, or indeed which relates to the Church in this World?

Suppoſe, when his Majeſty was laſt at *Hanover*, any one ſhould have aſſerted, that the *Regency* had no Authority in Civil Matters; would the Regency have thought it any Excuſe, if he had ſaid that he only meant they were not the Governours of *Hanover?* Yet, my Lord, it would be as proper an Apology for him who had denied the Power of the Regency in *Great Britain*, to ſay he only meant they had not the ſupreme Power in *Hanover*, as for your Lordſhip, after a Denial of *all Viſible Church Authority* in this World, to ſay you only denied an Authority to paſs the irreverſible Sentence in the next World.

Thus has your Lordſhip left the Diſpute, and only pretended to deny that which no body ever claimed, *viz. that any Men have Authority to judge the World in Chriſt's ſtead, or paſs the irreverſible Sentence at the laſt Day.*

Your Lordſhip is here apprehenſive, that you ſhall be charged with *fighting without an Adverſary*, and therefore you point out ſeveral, and ſay, *I meant it againſt theſe, who are ſo very free in declaring others of Chriſt's Subjects out of God's Favour; and in obliging Almighty God, to execute the Sentences of Men.*

There has been indeed, my Lord, a Number of Men, ever ſince Chriſtianity appeared in the World, who have been *very free* in declaring *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics* out of God's Favour, and who have maintained that theſe Heretics and Schiſmatics, when cenſured by the Church, cannot be received into God's Favour, but by their ſubmitting to, and returning to the Church. But now, if your Lordſhip means your Doctrine againſt theſe, you are ſtill *without an Adverſary*, and might as well mean it againſt no Body; for theſe Men never pretended to *judge others in Chriſt's ſtead, or to erect an Eccleſiaſtical Authority in Oppoſition to the Great Tribunal, which is the only Authority you pretend to deny.*

You go on? *If we had not ſuch amongſt Proteſtants*; yet it might be pardonable to guard *our People againſt the Preſumptions of the* Roman Catholicks; *who aſſume to themſelves that Power of Judgment, which Chriſt alone can have.*

Surely

Surely your Lordſhip muſt have ſo great an Averſion to Popery, that you never could ſo much as look into their Books; for otherwiſe I cannot conceive how you ſhould not know, that the *Roman* Catholicks pretended to no Power of Judging ſo as to affect People, but upon certain Conditions, as *Clave non errante*; but I ſuppoſe this is not a Power of Judging which belongs to our Saviour; *Clave non errante* has no Place in his Judgments. How then can your Lordſhip charge the *Papiſts* with aſſuming his Power, when that which they aſſume, cannot be aſcribed to him without Blaſphemy? So that, my Lord, it is juſt as pardonable to guard your People againſt theſe Preſumptions, as it is to alarm them with falſe and imaginary Dangers.

Again you ſay; *But how lately is it, that we have had People terrified with this very Preſumption, even by Proteſtants; and the Terms of Church Power, and the ſpiritual fatal Effects of Church Cenſures, made uſe of to frighten Men into a ſeparate Communion?*

My Lord, I ſhall not here enter into the Merits of that Controverſy, which your Lordſhip here points at; it being the Doctrine it ſelf which your Lordſhip blames, and not the Miſapplication of it. Thus you cenſure them, not becauſe they would draw People from a *true* Church to a *falſe* one, but becauſe they

 pretend

pretend to frighten Men out of one Communion into another. This is your Lordſhip's heavy Charge againſt them, that they ſhould preſume to talk of the Differences of Communions, and prefer one Communion to another. So that whoever thinks any way of Worſhip to be dangerous, and endeavours to withdraw People from it, is here cenſured by your Lordſhip, as pretending to judge in Chriſt's ſtead, and ſetting up an Authority in Oppoſition to the laſt Day.

Your Lordſhip ſaith, it is with this *very Preſumption (viz.* that they can paſs the irreverſible Sentence) *that theſe Men have endeavoured to frighten People into a ſeparate Communion.* If I ſhould ſay, that it is upon *Preſumption* that Chriſt never appeared in the World, that your Lordſhip has delivered your late Doctrines, I ſhould freely ſubmit to the Charge of Calumny; and I am ſure your Lordſhip has ventured as far, in ſaying that it was with *this very Preſumption* that theſe Men delivered ſuch Doctrines. And your Lordſhip has as much reaſon to charge them with *Atheiſm*, as with this *very Preſumption*; for they no more preſume *to judge in Chriſt's ſtead*, or paſs the *irreverſible Sentence*, than they preſume there is no God.

Your Lordſhip has ſtill, it ſeems, another Adverſay, a late Writer (the Dean of *Chicheſter*) *who has ſpoken unwarily of the Effects of the ſpiritual Puniſhments, the*

the Church inflicts, being generally suspended till the Offender comes into the other World *.

This first Censure is very modest, carrying it no farther than an *unwary* Expression; but presently the Charge advances; *and*, you say, *if it be thus, you confess you think the Condition of Christians much worse than the Condition in which St.* Paul *describes the Heathens, who are left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God.* So that at last it comes to this, that the Dean has taught such Doctrine, as makes it more desirable to be a *Heathen* than a *Christian.*

Let us therefore try how this Charge is supported: The *Dean* has said, *the Effects of spiritual Punishments are generally suspended till the Offender* comes into another World †; therefore, says your Lordship, *the Condition of Christians is much worse than that of Heathens*, and the Reason is this, *because Heathens are left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God*; so that if spiritual Punishments signify any thing to Offenders in the other World, or *have any Effect there*, then such People are in your Lordship's Judgment, not *left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God.*

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* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 35. † *Serm.* p. 8.

Pray,

Pray, my Lord, how does it follow that if ſpiritual Puniſhments have any Effect in *the other World*, that then Offenders *are not left to the righteous Judgment of God?*

Is it an Argument that People are not *left to the righteous Judgment of God*, becauſe they are to be puniſhed in the other World? Or is it an Argument that they are excluded from God's righteous Judgment, becauſe they are not puniſhed till they come thither? I ſhould have thought it a plain Argument for the direct contrary, and that one could not give a ſtronger Proof that ſuch Offenders were left *to the righteous Judgment of God*, than by ſaying that the Effects of ſuch Puniſhments are not felt till the Offender comes into the other World; I ſhould have thought this a manifeſt Declaration that the Offender was to fall to the *righteous Judgment of God*, ſince he was not to feel any Puniſhment till he was fallen into God's Hands. If the *Dean* had intended to teach that Church Puniſhments have no Effect, but ſuch as the *righteous Judgment of God* gives them, how could he have better ſignified his Intention, than by declaring, that *the Effects of ſuch Puniſhments are generally ſuſpended till the Offender comes into the other World?* How could the *Dean* more expreſsly guard againſt any horrible Apprehenſions of Church Cenſures, or more directly refer the Cauſe to God, than he has done here? His Words

are

are a plain Declaration, that ſuch Offenders muſt fall to the *righteous Judgment of God*, ſince they are to fall into his Hands before they feel the Effects of ſuch Puniſhment.

If any diſcontented Offender againſt the *Church* ſhould tell me, that if the Cenſures of the Church can ſignify any thing to him, he ſhould be glad to be a *Heathen*, and have his Fate amongſt them; would it not be ſufficient Matter of Satisfaction to tell him, that theſe Puniſhments will have no Effect but in the other World, where there can be no Injuſtice; and that it is the ſame God who judges the Heathens, who will judge Chriſtians?

Yet this Declaration, which is the only Ground for Satisfaction to Men of Conſcience, under the Cenſures of the Church, is by your Lordſhip pretended to be ſuch an Evil, as to make us rather reſign our Chriſtianity, than ſubmit to it. This is all which the *Dean* has ſaid to make it more deſirable to be a *Heathen* than a *Chriſtian*.

Suppoſe, my Lord, the Matter had been worded ſtronger, and inſtead of ſaying that the *Effects of ſpiritual Puniſhments are generally ſuſpended till the Offenders come into the other World*, it had been ſaid, *the ſpiritual Cenſures* of the Church ſhall *riſe in the Judgment and condemn Offenders*. If it had been thus expreſſed, what Complaints might you not have made againſt ſuch *unwary* Expreſſions? What Cruelties and Hardſhips

ſhips might you not have charged on ſuch Doctrine? And how advantagiouſly might you have compared the Felicity of *Heathenism* to ſuch *Chriſtianity?*

But, my Lord, that *Divine Perſon* who has reſerved to himſelf the righteous Judgment of the World, has yet declared to a certain *Generation*, that the Men of *Nineveh* ſhall *riſe up in the Judgment with them and condemn them, becauſe thoſe repented at the preaching of* Jonas, *but theſe did not, though a greater than* Jonas *was with them* *.

Now, my Lord, here lies the ſame Objection againſt this Doctrine, which there does againſt the *Dean*'s. For is it not full as hard that the *Repentance* of the Men of *Nineveh*, or any where elſe, ſhould have any Effect upon the Impenitent at the Day of Judgment, as that the *Cenſures* of the Church ſhould have any Effect upon Offenders in the other World? Is it not as cruel that the Impenitent ſhall have their Guilt aggravated by other People's *preaching* or *Repentance*, as by other People's *Cenſures?* And would it not be as proper here to ſay, if this be ſo, happy they who never heard of *Preaching* or *Repentance*, as to ſet forth the Happineſs of *Heathens*, becauſe they are free from *Church Cenſures?* If the *Sentence* of the Church will riſe in Judgment and condemn Offenders,

* *Matth.* 12. 41.

then

then you ſay ſuch Perſons do not fall to the righteous Judgment of God. But is not this as true of the Men of *Nineveh*, that if they ſhall riſe up in Judgment and condemn the Impenitent, that then ſuch Perſons are not left to the *righteous Judgment of God?*

So that had you been one of our Saviour's Hearers, you muſt have been as much aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine, as at the Dean's *unwary Expreſſion*, and have been obliged to ſay then, as you have ſaid now, *that you have ſuch Notions of the Goodneſs of God, and of his gracious Deſigns in the Goſpel, that you think it your Duty to declare your Judgment, that the Suppoſition is greatly injurious to the Honour of God and of the Goſpel, and the thing itſelf impoſſible to be conceived* *.

Your Lordſhip has here only advanced this Argument againſt the *Significancy* of Church *Cenſures*, but any one elſe may as juſtly, and to as much Purpoſe urge it againſt every Part of Chriſtianity.

Thus it may ſerve to prove that it would be better never to have had the Scriptures; for if any Texts of Scripture ſhall riſe in Judgment and condemn thoſe who diſbelieved them, or diſregarded their Doctrine, then it may be ſaid, much happier are the Heathens, who have nothing of this to fear from any

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p 36.

Scriptures,

Scriptures, but are left to their own *Conſciences and the righteous Judgment of God.*

Again; As this Argument proves even the Scriptures to be an Unhappineſs, ſo will it prove every Advantage in human Life to be a Miſery.

For it is certain that the *Examples* of religious Men, the good *Advice* of our *Friends*, and the virtuous *Commands* of our *Parents* and *Governours*, will, if neglected, *affect* our Condition; and though, like the ſpiritual *Corrections* of the Church, they may not be felt here, yet hereafter they will riſe in Judgment and condemn us. May I not here ſay with your Lordſhip, *if the Caſe be thus*; if other People's *Wiſdom*, *Virtue*, *Advice* or *Commands*, can affect our *State* in the next World, then more happy are thoſe who never ſaw a *good* or *wiſe* Man in their Lives, and who have nothing to fear from the *Advice* or *Commands* of any, but *are left to their own Conſciences and the righteous Judgment of God.*

So that you cannot condemn the *Dean*'s Doctrine as *horrible*, without condemning it as an *horrible* thing, that the Men of *Nineveh* ſhould riſe in Judgment and condemn the impenitent *Jews*; or an *horrible* thing that the *Light* of the *Goſpel*, the *Bleſſings* of Chriſtianity, and the *Advantages* of Education, ſhould have *any Effect* in the next World upon thoſe, who deſpiſed them in this World.

Of

Of the Authority of the Church, as it relates to Excommunication.

IN order to vindicate this Doctrine thoroughly, and ſhew upon what bottom it is founded, I ſhall, as briefly as I can, ſtate the *Nature* and *Intent* of ſpiritual Puniſhments, and ſhew what Effects they have upon Offenders in the other World; from whence, I perſuade myſelf, it will farther appear, that ſuch Effects do no more exclude Perſons from the righteous Judgment of God, than the Heathens are excluded from his righteous Judgment.

Now that corrupt Members may be cut off from Chriſtian Communion, till by their Amendment they recommend themſelves to a Re-admiſſion, is plain from Scripture. This is even granted by your Lordſhip, that *Chriſtians may ſet a Mark upon* Notorious Offenders, *even by refuſing to them the peculiar Tokens and Marks of Chriſtian Communion, as well as by avoiding their Company and Converſation* *. But then your Lordſhip makes no more of it, *than a Right which all Chriſtians have to avoid an open, wilful, and*

* P. 39.

ſcanda-

ſcandalous Sinner *; ſo that *this Excommunication, conſidered as a Church Act*, is only the ſame Power in a Body or Society, of avoiding Perſons they abhor; which is the common Privilege of every ſingle Perſon, whether in or out of the Church, to ſhun thoſe he diſlikes.

And all the Excommunication you allow, is this, that as private Perſons have a Right to ſhun and avoid thoſe they diſlike, ſo the Church may exclude ſuch Members as are diſapproved of; and that this judging, or excommunicating, is a Right equally inveſted in all Chriſtians, and entirely without any Effect upon the Perſon excommunicated, ſo as to make his Condition either better or worſe before God.

I ſhall therefore, my Lord, beg leave to ſhow that the Power of Excommunication, is a *Judicial Power*, which belongs to particular Perſons, which they have a Right to exerciſe from the Authority of Chriſt; and that Perſons ſo excommunicated, are not to be looked upon as Perſons who are only to be abhorred and avoided by Chriſtians, as any Man may avoid thoſe he diſlikes, but as Perſons who are to be avoided by Chriſtians, becauſe they lie under the *Sentence* of God, and are by his *Authority* turned out of his Kingdom.

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* P. 43.

That

That Excommunication is a Power which belongs only to particular Perſons, will appear from the Nature of the Thing itſelf, as it is an Excluſion of Perſons from the Chriſtian Worſhip: for as only particular Men can *officiate* in the Chriſtian Worſhip, and admit People into Communion; ſo only thoſe Perſons can refuſe the Sacrament, and exclude Offenders from Communion. Nothing can be more plain, then that thoſe who can alone adminiſter the Sacrament, canalone exclude Men from it.

All Perſons are admitted conditionally into the Chriſtian Covenant, and have only a Title to the Benefits of it, or the ordinary Means of Grace, as they perform the Conditions of their Admiſſion; and thoſe ſame Perſons who have alone the Authority to admit them into the Church upon thoſe Conditions, have alone the Authority to exclude them for Non-performance. And their Act of Excluſion is *as effectual* towards the taking from them all the Privileges of Chriſtians, and as truly makes them *Aliens* from the Kingdom of God, as their Act of Admiſſion at firſt entitled them to all the Benefits of Church-Communion. For as they have as much Authority to exclude ſome, as they have to admit others into the Church, the Authority being the ſame in both Caſes, it muſt be in both Caſes *equally* effectual.

If your Lordſhip will ſay that all People, are equally qualified to admit Perſons into the Church, that, *Go ye, and baptiſe all Nations*, conferred the ſame Powers on all Chriſtians; then indeed it muſt be granted that Excommunication, or Excluſion from the Church, is a Right equally inveſted in all Chriſtians. But as ſure as Chriſt gave peculiar Powers to his Apoſtles, as ſure as they left particular Men to ſucceed them in their Powers, ſo ſure is it that only ſuch Succeſſors can either admit or exclude Perſons from Chriſtian Communion.

Secondly; That Excommunication belongs to particular Perſons, will appear from the Inſtitution of it in Scripture.

If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more. And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican. Verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven *.

Here, my Lord, is as plain an Inſtitution of *Excommunication*, as can well be con-

* *Matth.* 18. 15.

ceived;

ceived; and he who can doubt of it, may doubt whether Baptiſm be inſtituted in Scripture.

Firſt, We may obſerve that here is an Authority given to the Church over the Offender, and that *ſuch* an Authority, as neither belonged to private Men, either ſeperate or united together; for the Offender here had firſt been admoniſhed, by a ſingle Perſon, then by *one or two more*, *i. e.* an indefinite Number, but ſtill here is nothing granted but Admonition; but as ſoon as he is brought before the Church, there an Authority appears, and the Offender is to feel its Sentence, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen.*

Secondly; That this Authority did not belong to the Church, conſidered *only* as a greater Number of Chriſtians, but as it ſignified particular Perſons who had this Authority from Chriſt, for the Edification of his Church.

For Chriſt expreſsly declares in the following Verſe, that *where two or three are met together in his Name, there is He in the midſt of them.*

Here is the Deſcription of that Church before whom the Offender was to be brought, and whoſe Authority Chriſt promiſes to ſupport; it is *two or three met together in his Name.*

Now the Church had not this Authority over the Offender, conſidered as a *Number*, *i. e.* as two or three; for we ſee that the Offender had been already before *ſuch* a Church; he had been before *two or thee*; and after Neglect of them, he was brought before another *two or three*, met together *in Chriſt's Name*. Which is a plain Proof that the Offender was not cenſured by the Church, as it ſignifies a Number of Chriſtians, but as it implies particular Perſons acting in the *Name* of Chriſt, and with *his Authority*.

Thirdly; We may obſerve that the Authority here granted to the Church is a *Judicial Authority*, ſuch an Authority as *affects* and *alters* the *Condition* of the Perſon excommunicated, implied in theſe Words, *Let him be unto thee as an Heathen*; *that is*, as the Biſhop of *Oxford* obſerves, *in the moſt natural and common Senſe of the Words, they ſhould look upon him no longer as a Member of the Church, but place him amongſt Infidels* *; and again, *as reduced into the State of Heathens* †.

Now unleſs it can be ſaid, that a Perſon who is turned out of the Kingdom of God, and reduced into the State of Heathens, is in the ſame Condition which he was, when he was in the Church, and had a Right to all the Benefits of Communion; unleſs we can

* *Chur. Gov.* p. 351. † *Ibid.* p. 356.

ſay

ſay that a Perſon thus rejected from the Means of Grace, by the *Commiſſion* of Chriſt, is in the ſame Condition with him, who is continued in the Church by the *ſame Commiſſion* of Chriſt; it muſt be allowed that here is a *Judicial* Power granted to the Church, and ſuch as affects the Condition of the Offender in the Sight of God.

Fourthly; It is to be obſerved, that this Authority of the Church is made *Judicial* by the expreſs Promiſe of God to ratify and confirm it. For after it is ſaid, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen*, it is declared, that *whatſoever they ſhould* thus *bind on Earth, ſhould be bound in Heaven.*

From all this, it plainly appears, that Excommunication is as truly a Divine *Poſitive Puniſhment*, as Baptiſm is a Divine *Poſitive Bleſſing*; and that the one as certainly *excludes* us from the Kingdom of God, as the other *admits* us into it. For ſince here is as plainly Chriſt's *expreſs Authority* to take from ſome Men the ordinary Means of Grace, and exclude them from the common Benefits of Chriſtianity, as there is his Authority *to go and baptiſe all Nations*; I deſire to know, why one is not as truly a Divine *Poſitive Inſtitution* as the other? Is not Chriſt's Authority as effectual and ſignificant in excluding, as in admitting Perſons into his Kingdom? Is not that ſame Power as able to take away the Privileges of Church-Mem-

berſhip, as it was at firſt to grant them?

If therefore there be any Bleſſing or Happineſs in our being admitted into the Church; there muſt be as much Miſery and Puniſhment in our *Excluſion* from it. For as it implies the Loſs of all thoſe Privileges and Favours we were made Partakers of, by our Admiſſion into the Church; ſo we muſt needs be puniſhed in the ſame degree that we were happy.

If therefore *Baptiſm*, a Divine *Poſitive Inſtitution* to admit us into the Privileges of Chriſtianity, makes any Alteration in our Condition, as to the Favour of God, *i. e.* if we are brought any nearer to God by Baptiſm, than we were before; then it plainly follows, *Excommunication*, a Divine *Poſitive Inſtitution*, which deprives us of all theſe Privileges of Chriſtianity, and, as the Biſhop of *Oxford* expreſſes it, *reduces* Offenders *into the State of Heathens*, muſt needs affect our Condition with regard to the Favour of God.

For if there be any thing in Baptiſm which is juſt Matter of Joy, there is ſomething equally Terrible in Excommunication; which, when rightly executed, as effectually makes us Aliens from the Promiſes of God, as Baptiſm, when rightly adminiſtered, makes us Children of God, and Heirs of eternal Life. So that he who can ridicule and expoſe the *Terrors* and *Effects* of Excommunication, is acting

acting juſt as Chriſtian a part, as he who derides and deſpiſes the Benefits and Advantages of *Baptiſm*.

Seeing therefore the Church hath as expreſs an Authority to turn ſome Men out of the Church, as it hath to admit others into it, it is as falſe an Account of *Excommunication*, to make it only that *common Right* which every Man has, to avoid thoſe he diſlikes; as if it ſhould be ſaid, that *Admiſſion* into the Church by Baptiſm, implies no more, than that *common Right* which every Man has to do good Offices for thoſe he likes. Now, my Lord, is Baptiſm to be adminiſtered, becauſe Perſons may do good Offices for one another? Is there a Power in the Church to encreaſe its Members, by admitting others into Communion, for this reaſon, becauſe People have a common Right to chuſe their Company? If not, my Lord, how comes the Excluſion of Members to be nothing but a *common Right* of avoiding thoſe we diſlike? Are not Perſons excluded from all the Benefits of their Admiſſion? So that if there was any Authority required for the Admiſſion of Perſons into the Church, if this Authority was only from God, it is certain that an Excluſion from theſe Church-Privileges, cannot be executed but by the ſame Authority, which firſt granted them. For no Perſon can be deprived of any Privileges, but by that Power which at firſt granted them.

When therefore your Lordſhip recurs to the *common Right* of Perſons to avoid, if they can, thoſe they diſlike, in order to ſtate the Nature of Excommunication; it is juſt as much to the Purpoſe, as if I ſhould get a *Chymiſt* to examine the natural Qualities of Water, in order to ſtate the true Efficacy of *Baptiſm:* for Men no more act by any Powers of their own when they exclude Offenders, than they baptize others into Communion by their own Authority, or than Water unites them to Chriſt by its natural Qualities.

Yet your Lordſhip ſets forth the Nature of Excommunication, and the Right the Church has to it, only from that *common Right, which all Chriſtians have of avoiding if they can thoſe they diſlike* Thus you ſay, the Church may excommunicate, becauſe *every Perſon has a Right to judge, nay he cannot help judging of the Behaviour of Men**; that *every Man will judge him to be a Murtherer, who takes away his Neighbour's Life unjuſtly.*

This comes up as truly to the Nature of Excommunication, and is as juſt an Account of it, as if any one ſhould ſet forth the Authority of a Britiſh *Judge*, and ſhow the Extent of his *Judicial* Power, by ſaying, he indeed may judge and condemn a *Murtherer*,

* P. 39.

for

for this is the Right of every Perſon to judge, *and no one can help judging and condemning a Murtherer.* It is as conſiſtent with Senſe, thus to ſet out the Power of the Judge, as it is with Reaſon and Scripture, to compare Excommunication to that private Power of *Judging* and *Thinking* which every one enjoys.

For, my Lord, can it be ſuppoſed that when our Saviour tells them, that they ſhould reject ſuch a Perſon out of the Church, and look upon him as an Heathen, and that he would bind, *i. e.* confirm their Sentence; can it be ſuppoſed, that he only meant they might *think* and *judge* a wicked Perſon to be a wicked Perſon, only in ſuch a manner as every Man cannot help Thinking and Judging? If our bleſſed Lord only here intended this, what occaſion was there for his Promiſe to ratify their Judgment? What need is there of an Aſſurance, that they ſhall privately judge, what they cannot help privately judging? Or indeed to what Purpoſe is any Promiſe at all made here, if nothing is to be effected? If this Sentence be only a private, unauthorized Declaration, like the Opinion or Judgment of private Men, what Room can there be for this Ratification of our Saviour? If no Effects are intended in the *Judgment* of the Church, what can be the meaning of this Promiſe? Or rather, ſince our Saviour has here inſtituted the Authority, and promiſed

miſed to ratify the Exerciſe of it, how dares any Chriſtian to compare it to a private perſonal Power of Judging, or declare that it is without any Effect upon the Condition of Chriſtians? For, my Lord, either ſomething is here promiſed to the Sentence of the Church, or there is not; if there is ſomething promiſed, then the Sentence of the Church is no more like the perſonal Sentence of private Men, than the Power of a Judge is like the Power of a private Man; if you will ſay there is nothing here promiſed in theſe Words, *whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven*, &c. then you muſt ſay that there is nothing at all meant in them; for it is impoſſible to ſhew that they can have any other Meaning, than that of a Promiſe; ſo that if no Promiſe is made, they are certainly ſo many dead Letters.

Again; That this is a *Judicial* Power, is alſo evident from the Caſe of the inceſtuous *Corinthian*. St. *Paul* ſays, *What have I to do, to judge them alſo which are without?* Now the Apoſtle could not have put this Queſtion, if by Judging here had been meant no Authority, but a private Power of judging and thinking a Sinner to be a Sinner. For a Man can no more help judging a Murtherer to be a Murtherer, which is without the Church, than if he were within the Church. And it is as proper for us to judge and think aright of thoſe who are out of the Church,

as

as of thoſe who are within it. So that St. *Paul* could not mean, What have I to do to think a *Murtherer* to be a *Murtherer* which is without the Church, it being every Man's Duty to think as truly of all Things and Perſons as he can? Seeing therefore he plainly intimates that he had a Power of Judging in the Church, which did not belong to him out of the Church, it follows that this Power was *Judicial* and *Authoritative*; for a private Power of Judging and Thinking, belongs to every Man with regard to every Thing.

We ſhall more eaſily underſtand what is meant by the *Effects* of ſpiritual Puniſhments, if we conſider them under this Diviſion.

Firſt, Such as are the primary and intended Effects; ſecondly, Such as are only the *accidental* Effects of them.

Now as to the primary and intended Effects of ſpiritual Puniſhments, they are theſe.

Firſt, To preſerve the Honour of God and his Church, that ill Members being cut off, it might be *preſented a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it might be Holy, and without Blemiſh* *.

Secondly, To reform Offendors, and reclaim them from their Vices; it is a Diſcipline given to the Church for the Edification, and not the Deſtruction of its Members.

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* Epheſ. 4. 25.

Thus

Thus St. *Paul* says, the incestuous *Corinthian* was to be *delivered over to Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, that his Spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord* *.

Thirdly, To preserve the rest of the Church from the ill Influence of their Example, and that by such Punishments exercised upon others, they might fear, and learn from thence not to offend.

These are the intended Effects of the Punishments which the Church inflicts, to preserve it a Holy Society, and save the Souls of its Members.

God Almighty has instituted several Means for the Advancement of Virtue, and the Salvation of Mankind; and amongst others, he has set up this Authority of the Church to promote the same Ends. It is his *human, ordinary* Means for the Preservation of his Church; and therefore as it cannot operate infallibly, or affect People with a Divine Certainty, it is only conditional, and is to prevail towards the Salvation of Mankind, as far as human and conditional Means can prevail.

And indeed, it is an Institution which has a very natural Tendency to produce the Effects designed by it. For, considering Christianity as a Covenant with God, wherein our Title to Happiness depends upon our Use of

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* 1 *Cor.* 5. 5.

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the ordinary inſtituted Means of Grace, nothing can more naturally induce us to live worthy of ſuch Means, than this Authority in the Church to withdraw them upon our Abuſe, and expel us from the Terms of the Covenant. Men would not dare to tranſgreſs, when they ſaw they could neither break the Laws, nor corrupt the Faith of Chriſtianity, without being turned out of the Church, by ſuch a Power as Chriſt hath ſet up for that Purpoſe, and with his Promiſe to make good its Decrees. They muſt be very obſtinate Sinners, who could be content to lie under a Sentence, which as effectually takes from them all Pretenſion to Chriſtian Happineſs, as their Baptiſm entitled them to thoſe Pretenſions at firſt.

The chief Reaſon why Sinners are generally ſo little affected with the Horror of their Condition, is becauſe they look upon their Puniſhment at the future Judgment, as a great Diſtance off; and ſince they are within the Church, and enjoy the ordinary Means of Grace, they think they can repent in time. But now Chriſt, by inſtituting this Church Authority, has ſuited his Diſcipline to the Weakneſs and Frailty of our Nature; and they who are only to be affected with Things preſent, have a preſent Judgment to fear; which, though it is only the Judgment of Men, yet is the Judgment of ſuch Men as are commiſſioned to pronounce it in Chriſt's Name,

Name, and with his Promiſe to ratify and confirm it. So that they have as much reaſon to look upon themſelves as effectually caſt out by God in that Sentence, as they were received into Covenant with God by Baptiſm; for there is the ſame Divine Authority to ſupport them both.

As to thoſe other *Effects* of ſpiritual Puniſhments in the other World, they are not the intended, but *accidental* Effects of ſuch Puniſhments, which are brought upon Offenders by their own wicked Behaviour under them.

Thus the Salvation of Mankind is the primary *intended Effect* of Chriſtianity; yet it may have ſuch Effect upon ſome Men by their own Impiety in it, as to make it better for them if they had never heard of the Name of Chriſt. For Chriſtianity may become ſo much a Puniſhment to ſome Perſons in the other World, that their Condition may be leſs tolerable than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. But then this is not the intended Effect of Chriſtianity, but an accidental Effect which ſuch Perſons bring upon themſelves; who by their own ill Conduct turn a Mercy into a Judgment, and make that which was intended to ſave them, the accidental Cauſe of their greater Ruin.

Thus it is with ſpiritual Puniſhments; they are the merciful Corrections of God intended to prevent our future Miſery, but if diſregarded,

garded, will certainly increaſe it. This will eaſily explain what is meant by the *Effects* of ſpiritual Puniſhments in the other World, or how *they are ſuſpended till the Offender comes thither.* It is not the direct intended Effect of Church Puniſhments to encreaſe the Miſery of Sinners, or damn them in the other World; no more than it is the direct intended Effect of Chriſtianity to increaſe People's Damnation: But as Chriſtianity, if abuſed, will be the accidental Cauſe of their greater Damnation who ſo abuſe it; ſo the Cenſures of the Church, when deſpiſed, will have this accidental Effect, as to increaſe the Puniſhment of thoſe who ſo deſpiſed them. This is the Nature of thoſe Effects, which ſpiritual Puniſhments will have upon the Impenitent in another World.

As for Inſtance, a Perſon who is turned out of the Church, may all this while be luſty and ſtrong, and flouriſh in all the Advantages of this Life; but when he comes into the other World, he may then find that the ſpiritual Puniſhment was a ſore Evil, that it is ratified by Chriſt, has increaſed his Guilt, and will be Matter of Puniſhment hereafter.

He will then find that the Cenſure of the Church has increaſed his Guilt in theſe Reſpects.

Firſt, As it was a *Judicial Sentence* pronounced by Chriſt's Authority, and therefore not to be deſpiſed or neglected without great Impiety;

Impiety; ſo that let the Sinner have been what he will before, when he continues in his Sins in Contempt of *this Tribunal* ſet up in Chriſt's Name, his Guilt is thereby exceedingly increaſed.

Secondly, As it is the *moſt powerful Means*, and the very utmoſt which God can do to reclaim, or even terrify Sinners from their Impiety; as it is the moſt awakening Call to Repentance, an Inſtitution only leſs terrible than the laſt Judgment; thoſe who are not affected with it, muſt be rendered more odious in the Sight of God, and made ripe for a ſeverer Puniſhment.

Theſe, my Lord, are the Effects of ſpiritual Puniſhments in the other World; it is thus that they alter the Condition of Offenders in the Sight of God in regard to his Favour. They are certainly under greater Diſpleaſure, after they have deſpiſed the Cenſures of Church Authority, and have reſiſted an *Inſtitution*, which is the laſt poſſible Means to recover them.

In former Times, God has been pleaſed to ſend his *Prophets* to forewarn Sinners of their Deſtruction, as *Jonah* to the Men of *Nineveh:* But in the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, he governs us by his ordinary Providence; and though he does not ſend expreſs Meſſengers to recal Sinners, yet he has inſtituted a *ſtanding Authority* in his Church, to cenſure Offenders, and give them up to Deſtruction in his Name,

Name, unleſs they immediately repent. And what can we think more dreadful than a *Sentence* thus pronounced againſt us by God's Authority, and with his Promiſe to confirm it?

Was there any thing more awakening or more dreadful in the Preaching of *Jonah*, than in this Declaration? *Jonah* could only preach and declare, he could execute nothing himſelf; it was his being ſent in *God's Name*, which created all the Terror, and was the Motive to Repentance. Now though the Church can *only* cenſure and declare, yet ſince it is as truly commiſſioned to cenſure in *God's Name*, as *Jonah* was ſent in *God's Name*, there is as much reaſon to dread the Conſequences of neglecting the Church, as of not repenting at the Meſſage or Preaching of any Prophet from God.

I muſt now beg leave here, my Lord, *to lament an Aſſertion from the Hands of a Chriſtian and Proteſtant Biſhop*; where you declare, that the *Excommunication of the inceſtuous* Corinthian, *neither added to God's Diſpleaſure, nor would the want of it have at all diminiſhed it. Neither if he had dyed in an impenitent Condition, would that Sentence have had any Effect in the other World* *.

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 38.

This, my Lord, plainly ſuppoſes that there is neither *Authority* nor *Advantage* in Excommunication; for if there were, it is certain that our *Abuſe* of it as an *Advantage*, and our Contempt of it as an *Authority*, muſt needs increaſe our Guilt, and conſequently God's Diſpleaſure. Yet your Lordſhip here teaches the World, that if the inceſtuous *Corinthian*, *though juſtly cenſured*, and that by an Apoſtle directing, and the whole Congregation joining, had died impenitent, *that Sentence would have had no Effect in the other World.*

Let us therefore ſuppoſe that ſome great Patron of Chriſtian Liberty had gone to the diſconſolate *Corinthian*, ſorrowing under the Sentence of the Church, and endeavoured to quiet him after this manner.

" Why do you diſquiet your ſelf with vain " Fears about the Cenſure of the Church, " which neither hath nor can have an Effect " upon your Condition as to the Favour of " God. Let the Apoſtle and Church be as " ſolemn as they pleaſe in the Denunciation; " let them in the Name of Chriſt deliver you " over to *Satan*; yet take Courage, and fear " nothing from all this; for you may de- " pend upon it, that, after all, you are but " juſt where you was, before this Sentence " was paſſed. And if you die impenitent, " you have no Effects of this Cenſure to fear " in the other World.

Now

Now this is the Doctrine your Lordſhip has taught for the Conſolation of thoſe who are, or are likely to be under the Sentence of the Church; which if it be now found Doctrine, it was as proper to be told the *Corinthian* then, as it is for your Lordſhip to teach it now. And if your Lordſhip had lived then, it would have been as proper to have told the *Corinthian*, as to tell us now; and you muſt have lain under the ſame Chriſtian Neceſſity of delivering him from vain Fears, which now conſtrains you to ſet all at liberty from the like Apprehenſions.

St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of the Sentence paſſed upon the *Corinthian*, ſays, *Sufficient to ſuch a Man was this Puniſhment* *. Now, my Lord, if it have nothing of the Nature of a Puniſhment, if it has no Effect where it is inflicted, if the Perſon ſaid to be puniſhed can feel no Effect from it, what ſtrange Language is this? Can that be called a Puniſhment, or a ſufficient Puniſhment, which can in no degree be felt, which produces no Effects, or makes no Alteration in the Perſon where it falls?

Again St. *Paul* tells us, that he had amongſt others which had corrupted the Faith, *delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, that they might learn not to blaſpheme* †.

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* 2 *Cor.* 2. † 1 *Tim.* 1. 19.

Now if this Sentence can have no Effect, if it cannot ſignify any thing to them, if they are juſt in the ſame Condition after it, which they were before, why ſhould it teach them not to blaſpheme? Why ſhould a Sentence which they had nothing to fear from, make them any longer afraid to continue in their Errors? Here was therefore either a pious Fraud made uſe of by the Apoſtle, to fright Men from their Hereſies by ſomething which was in itſelf vain and inſignificant, or elſe your Lordſhip has mightily miſtaken the Matter, in declaring that it is vain and inſignificant. The Apoſtle plainly inflicts theſe Cenſures, as a Terror to Offenders, and to frighten them from continuing in their evil Courſes; but if, as you ſay, Perſons be juſt in the ſame Condition after this Sentence, in which they were before, if it has no Effect upon them, though they are rightly cenſured, and yet die impenitent, which is what you expreſsly ſay of this *Corinthian*, then it is plain they are only pretended Terrors, and that when the Apoſtles uſe them as ſuch, they muſt be charged with uſing them as a pious Fraud. And it muſt be owned that your Lordſhip has very frankly made the Diſcovery.

But whoever has Piety enough to believe thoſe Firſt Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, will clear them from ſuch a Charge, and rather think it poſſible that you may miſtake in your Philo-

Philoſophy, then they in their Divinity.

To proceed; You declare that though the *inceſtuons* Corinthian *had died in an impenitent Condition, the Sentence of the Church would have had no Effect in the other World:* By which you muſt mean, that it could not affect his Condition there, ſo as to increaſe his Puniſhment, and that becauſe the *Sentence did not add to God's Diſpleaſure, which he incurs ſolely upon account of his own Behaviour, and not the Sentence of Men* *. As thus, I ſuppoſe, your Lordſhip means, that if an Adulterer is cenſured by the Church, he is under God's Diſpleaſure ſolely on account of his Adultery, and not more ſo, on account of the Sentence of the Church; which cannot make him more an Adulterer, or more guilty in the Sight of God. It is for this reaſon that Church Cenſures are ſo inſignificant, ſo void of all Effect in the other World; becauſe it is our Sins alone, and not the Sentence of Men, which loſes us the Favour of God.

Let us therefore, my Lord, ſuppoſe that God himſelf had delivered *this Sentence* againſt the *Corinthian* which the Church did, your Lordſhip's Doctrine would have procured him the ſame Eaſe and Quiet, and taught him to be no more concerned about it, than if it had been a *mere Church Cenſure*, For it is

* P. 37.

as true in your Lordſhip's Senſe, that the *Sentence* of God did not add to his Diſpleaſure againſt him, that he was not angry at him becauſe of his *Sentence*, but upon account of the Offender's *Behaviour*. But, my Lord, will it therefore follow, that there is nothing to be dreaded in ſuch a Sentence? Will it follow, that if the Perſon dies impenitent under it, that it would have no Effect in the other World? Would your Lordſhip go about, and preach Liberty to Perſons under ſuch a Sentence, and aſſure them that the Sentence itſelf could have no Effect, that they were but juſt where they were before it was pronounced? Would you think it proper to deliver Men from ſuch Apprehenſions, and perſuade them that they are in no Danger from the Sentence of God? And that becauſe it is not his own Sentence, but their Behaviour which encreaſes his Diſpleaſure.

This may perhaps appear a little too ſhocking, to ſet up for an *Advocate* for the *Laity* againſt the *Sentence* of God; but, my Lord, if you was to do ſo, you would have the ſame Argument to defend your ſelf againſt any Effect in the *Divine Sentence*, which you now have againſt any Effect in the Sentence of the Church. It would be then as much to the Purpoſe to ſay, that God is not diſpleaſed with them, on the account of his *own Sentence*, but purely for their own *Behaviour*; as it is to tell Offenders, that it is not the

Sentence

Sentence of the Church, but their *Behaviour* which brings them under the Divine Diſpleaſure.

I muſt here therefore, my Lord, beg leave to call this a *ſtrict Demonſtration*, that if the Sentence of the Church is not to be feared; if it hath no Effect, becauſe it is not the *Sentence*, but our own *Behaviour* which alone procures us the Divine Diſpleaſure; if this be true, it is *Demonſtration*, that if God himſelf was to pronounce this Church Sentence, and turn Offenders out of Communion, that there would be *nothing to be feared from it*, that it could have *no Effect* in the other World; for God's Diſpleaſure againſt them, would not be occaſioned by his own *Sentence*, but by their *Behaviour*. So that was the Diſcipline of the Church in God's own Hands, and were he with his own Voice to threaten Sinners, as the Church now doth, your Lordſhip would be as much obliged to comfort the *Laity* againſt any Apprehenſion of any Effect from the *Sentence* itſelf, as you are now to deliver them from the *Fear of Man's Judgment*.

Again; If the *Sentence* of the Church is not to be dreaded, if it can have *no Effect* in the other World, becauſe we incur the Divine Diſpleaſure ſolely on account of our own Behaviour; then it is certain, that the Sentence of Chriſt himſelf at the laſt Day can have no Effect in the other World.

If therefore any unwary Divine, ſhould endeavour to alarm his Congregation with the *Effects* of Chriſt's Sentence at the laſt Day, your Lordſhip has taught any one to reject the *Doctrine*, as *greatly injurious to the Honour of God*; and that ſuch *Doctrine was alſo impoſſible in itſelf to be conceived*, he might preſume *ſtrictly to demonſtrate* *.

A Sentence which makes not a Tittle of Alteration in the Condition of a Man, in the Eyes of God, with regard to his Favour or Diſpleaſure, cannot be ſaid to have any Effect in the other World †. *But the Sentence of Chriſt at the laſt Day is of this ſort.*

Therefore the Sentence of Chriſt makes not a Tittle of Alteration in the Condition of a Man, in the Eyes of God, with regard to his Favour or Diſpleaſure.

That the Sentence of Chriſt makes no Alteration in the Condition of a Man with regard to the Favour or Diſpleaſure of God, is plain from hence; that Men incur the Divine Diſpleaſure ſolely on account of their own Behaviour

Thus, my Lord, it is demonſtratively certain, that as you have argued againſt the Effects of the Chuch's *Sentence* in the other World, you have taught any one to argue againſt any Effect in the Sentence of Chriſt in the next World; and conſequently it muſt

* P. 36. † P. 36.

be as *unwary* Doctrine, to frighten People with the Effects of Christ's Sentence, as to terrify them with the Effects of the Sentence of the Church. And you have offered such an Argument for the utter Insignificancy of this Sentence, as would make it equally insignificant, and void of all Effect, though it was pronounced by God himself. So that as much as you often seem to expose it as the *Sentence* of *weak* and *fallible* Men, yet your Argument does not reject it as a *fallible* Sentence, but as it is a *Sentence* far from having any Effect. So that if it was pronounced by God himself, it must be as much without *Effect*, and every Sentence which ever can be pronounced by God, must be without any Effect as to his Favour or Displeasure, because that is solely occasioned by our own Behaviour. Therefore an *infallible* Sentence can no more have any Effect, than a *fallible* one, because it is our *Behaviour* alone which can affect us. This, my Lord, will be of great use to some People, who will be glad to find that they have no more Effects to fear from God's Sentence, either in this World or the next, than your Lordship has from the Church.

Again; if there be *no Effect* in the Sentence of the Church in the other World, because our *Behaviour* alone incurs the Divine Displeasure, then *nothing* which God inflicts upon us here, can have *any Effect* in the other World.

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If therefore God's *Judgments* were visibly fallen upon some *Town* or *Country*, and an *unwary* Preacher should take occasion to excite them to a speedy Repentance, from the sad *Effects* such *Judgments* would have in the other World, if they had not their designed Effects in this, and declare that if they died impenitent under them in this World, they would feel *worse Effects* of them in the other World: A Disciple of your Lordship's might thus reprove the Falseness and Cruelty of such Doctrine. " How can you terrify People with " such vain Fears about God's Judgments? Is " he provoked against us by his own *Thunder* " and *Lightening?* Do his own *Judgments* " add any thing to his Displeasure against us? " Can any thing but our own Sins and Be- " haviour create his Displeasure? Therefore " we are certainly in the same Condition, as " to that, which we were in before his *Judg-* " *ments* fell upon us; and if we die impeni- " tent under them, they can have *no Effect* " in the other World. False then and greatly " dishonourable to God is your Doctrine, " which supposes any thing can have any " Effect of that kind, but our own Behavi- " our. To alarm us therefore with the *Ef-* " *fects* of such *Judgments*, is to put false " Fears into our Minds, and teach us to dread " things which are *impossible*; for it is im- " possible that any thing but our *own Be-*

" *haviour*

" *haviour* ſhould increaſe our Puniſhment."

Now, my Lord, is it cruel and unwary Doctrine to awaken Sinners under God's *Judgments* to Repentance, from a Senſe of the *worſe Effects* of thoſe Judgments in the other World, if they do not bring them to Repentance in this? If it is not, I deſire to know, why it is not as reaſonable to alarm People with the *Effects* of *ſpiritual Puniſhments*, if diſregarded, as with the Effects of God's Judgments, if they are neglected? What is there in the Nature of the Thing, why one Puniſhment may have Effect in the other World, and not the other? They are both *equally* God's *Puniſhments*, intended for the *ſame* Ends.

When Perſons are rightly turned out of the Church, and denied the ordinary Means of Grace, they are as truly under God's *ſpecial Judgment*, as a *Country* which is oppreſſed with *Famine* or *Peſtilence*; the one is his *inſtituted, ordinary Judgment*, to terrify Men from Iniquity; the other is his *extraordinary Judgment*, his miraculous Call to Repentance. It is therefore as ſound a Chriſtian Doctrine, to ſay, that if Perſons die impenitent under God's extraordinary Judgment, that ſuch Judgment will have no Effect in the other World; as to ſay, that if the inceſtuous *Corinthian* had died impenitent under the juſt Sentence of the Church, *i. e.* God's *ordinary* Judgment, that ſuch *Sentence* or *Judgment* would have had

had no Effect in the other World. And consequently, to endeavour to terrify Sinners with the Effects of God's *Judgments* in the other World, if they disregard them here, is as much condemned by your Lordship, as the Dean of *Chichester*'s Doctrine concerning the *Effects* of spiritual Punishments in the next World.

Lastly; Our blessed Saviour *told* the *Jews*, that if *he had not come, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin:* Which plainly implies, that his *coming* into the World altered their *Condition* as to the *Favour* of God, because it made them more guilty in his Sight than they were before he came. Yet your Lordship's Argument against the *Effects* of Church Punishments, directly denies this Doctrine. For your Objection against any *Effects* in Church *Punishments*, is full as strong against any *Effects* in Christ's *coming* into the World. And if People may be more guilty in the Sight of God, after Christ is *come*, they may be more guilty after they have been *censured* by the Church, for the Reason is the same in both Cases. For there can be no Reason given, why Christ's coming should affect their Condition with regard to the Favour of God, but that he had a *Divine Mission*, and was an *Authoritative Call* to Repentance; but this is equally true of *Excommunication*, that it is a *Divine Institution*, an *Authoritative Call* to Repentance;

tance; therefore they must either both be allowed to *affect* People's *Condition* with regard to the *Favour* of God, or neither; for the Reason is *exactly* the same in both Cases.

If therefore a learned *Pharisee*, seeing a relenting *Publican* touched with this Declaration of our Saviour's, should have reproved him after this manner:

" You need not be concerned at this Per-
" son's *coming* into the World, for his *coming*
" does not encrease God's Displeasure against
" you, which can only be raised by your
" own *Behaviour*; it is solely on account of
" that, that you can be out of God's *Favour*.
" Sinners are out of God's Favour, if this
" Person had never *come*, and his coming
" does not add to God's Displeasure against
" them; neither if they die in an impenitent
" Condition after he is come, will his *coming*
" have any Effect in the other World, where
" their Condition will not be determined by
" his *coming*, but by their own *Behaviour*:"

I should be glad, my Lord, to know what you could have said against such a Declaration, or how a Person who would have told the *incestuous Corinthian*, that if he died impenitent under the *Censure* of the Church, that it would have no Effect in the other World, could have any thing to object to the *Pharisee*, who tells the *Publican*, if he died impenitent after Christ's *coming*, that his *coming* will have *no Effect* in the other World.

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The *Phariſee* has *exactly* the ſame Reaſon, to tell the *Publican*, that he was neither the more, nor the leſs, out of God's Favour for Chriſt's *coming*, that you have to tell the *Corinthian*, *that he was neither the more, nor the leſs, out of God's Favour for what was done by the Church.* For the Cenſure here was right and infallible, and paſſed in the Name and by the Authority of Chriſt; it was paſſed by an *Apoſtle*, and you affirm that *Chriſt was in all that the Apoſtles did*; therefore it may be truly ſaid, that Chriſt himſelf *came* to the *Corinthian* in this Sentence, it was his *Authority* and *Infallibility* which cenſured him; and yet you ſay that if he had died impenitent under *this Cenſure*, he had been juſt where he was before, and it would have had *no Effect* in the other World.

Pray therefore, my Lord, let us know how any one can be more guilty for Chriſt's *coming*, or why it ſhall have any Effect in the other World upon thoſe who die impenitent? A few Reaſons againſt this *Phariſee*, would be ſo many Reaſons againſt your Lordſhip's Doctrine, For Chriſt as truly *comes* to Chriſtians in his *Inſtitutions*, as he *came* to the *Jews* in *Perſon*; and it is as dangerous to diſregard him in the one Appearance, as in the other.

This Account of Excommunication will, I hope, be thought a ſufficient Anſwer to your Lordſhip's ſtrict Demonſtration, that *it has no Effects*

Effects in the other World, nor adds any thing to God's Diſpleaſure. For from this it appears, that when you ſay, that *ſuppoſing no ſuch Puniſhment inflicted upon a wicked Chriſtian, he is under the Diſpleaſure of Almighty God to an* equal Degree, *as he would be if it were inflicted*:* It is as falſe as to ſay, that a *wicked Jew* was under the ſame Diſpleaſure of God before Chriſt came, as he was afterwards; or that a Perſon impenitent under an *extraordinary Judgment*, is no more out of God's Favour afterwards, than he was before, or if God had never viſited him. It is as falſe as to ſay, that if God himſelf was to pronounce the *Sentence* of the Church, that Perſons under it would be juſt in the ſame Degree of Favour they were before, or that the Sentence of Chriſt at the laſt Day will have no Effect.

The other Part of your Demonſtration proceeds thus; Excommunication has no Effect, becauſe *ſuppoſing it wrongfully inflicted upon a Chriſtian, he is ſtill equally in the Favour of God†.*

The whole of this Argument amounts to this, that a *right* Cenſure of the Church hath no Effect, becauſe a *wrong* one hath not. I ſhould think any one in a mighty want of Proof, who ſhould ſay that the Excommunication of the *inceſtuous Corinthian* could

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* P. 37. † P. 37.

have

have no Effect, becauſe the Excommunication of ſome virtuous Perſon will not have any Effect; yet this is your Lordſhip's Demonſtration, that it can ſignify nothing when it is *right*, *becauſe* it ſignifies nothing when it is *wrong*.

Is it an Argument, my Lord, that when a *Bullet* flies through a Man's Head it has *no Effect* upon him, becauſe it will have no Effect if it *miſs* him? Is it a Proof that *Motion* cannot produce *Heat*, becauſe *Reſt* cannot produce *Heat?*

If not, how comes it to be an Argument that a *right* Sentence hath no Effect, becauſe a *wrong* one hath not the *ſame* Effect?

A *right* Sentence is as oppoſite to a *wrong* one, as *Motion* is to *Reſt*; and it is as good Senſe to ſay *Motion* has no ſuch Effect, becauſe *Reſt* has no ſuch Effect; as to ſay a *right* Sentence has no Effect, becauſe a *wrong* one has not the ſame.

A *right* Sentence, is the *only* Excommunication which Chriſt hath inſtituted, and to which alone this Effect belongs; but it is ſtrange *Logick* to infer, that this *Inſtitution* cannot have *ſuch* an Effect, *becauſe* ſomething which Chriſt hath *not* inſtituted, hath not the ſame Effect.

A *wrong* Sentence is as truly a *Breach* and *Tranſgreſſion* of that *Excommunication* which Chriſt hath inſtituted, as Adultery is a *Breach* of the ſeventh Commandment; it is therefore

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as abſurd to ſay, that *Chaſtity* hath not *ſuch an* Effect, becauſe *Adultery* hath not the *ſame* Effect, as to affirm that a *right* Sentence hath not ſuch an Effect, becauſe a *Violation* of that right Sentence hath not the ſame Effect. Your Lordſhip's Argument is this, that the *Sentence* hath not *ſuch* an Effect in *ſome* Circumſtances, becauſe it hath not the *ſame* Effect in *all* Circumſtances: Which reſolves itſelf into this Propoſition, *That nothing can produce any particular Effect, unleſs it produce the ſame Effect in all Circumſtances.*

Your Lordſhip might as well have called it a *Demonſtration* againſt *all Effects* in the World, as againſt the *Effects* of ſpiritual Cenſures: For there is nothing in the World, no Powers either *Natural*, *Moral*, or *Political*, which produce their Effects but in ſome *ſuppoſed right* Circumſtances; yet this Eccleſiaſtical Power is *demonſtrated* away by your Lordſhip, becauſe it does not produce the ſame Effect in *all* Circumſtances.

Farther; If there is no Effect in a *right Sentence* of the Church, becauſe there is no Effect in a *wrong* one; then it will follow, that there is no Effect in either of the Sacraments when *rightly* received, becauſe they want ſuch Effect in Perſons who do not rightly receive them. It may as often happen that the Sacraments are adminiſtered in *wrong* Circumſtances, and as void of that Effect for which they were intended, as any *wrong* Sentence of the Church be pronounced;

but does it therefore follow, that there is *no Effect* in the Sacraments, that they are empty and uſeleſs to thoſe who receive them rightly, becauſe they are ſo to thoſe who receive them otherwiſe? Your Lordſhip muſt either affirm that the Sacraments have no Effect, or that the *Opus operatum* is always effectual; for if you ſay they have Effect, though not always, then it is certain that the *Sentence* of the Church may have Effect, though not *always*. Whether your Lordſhip will own the Popiſh Doctrine of the *Opus operatum*, or deny the Sacraments to be* Means of Grace, that is, to have any Effect, I cannot tell; but ſure I am, if you do not hold one of theſe Doctrines, you muſt own the Sacraments to have *conditional* Effects in *ſuppoſed* Circumſtances, which will ſufficiently confute your own *ſtrict Demonſtration*, that Excommunication can have *no* Effect, becauſe it has it not in *all* Circumſtances.

Again; I preſume it may very juſtly be ſaid, that the Chriſtian Revelation hath *ſome Effect* towards the Salvation of Mankind; but then it hath not this Effect *always* and *in all Caſes*, it is only effectual upon *certain Conditions*. Now if Excommunication can have no Effect, becauſe it is not effectual when it is wrongfully pronounced, then the Chriſtian Revelation can have no Effect towards ſaving thoſe who embrace it as they

* See the Demonſtration of the groſs and fundamental Errors, in the plain Account of the Sacrament, &c.

ſhould

ſhould, becauſe it has no ſuch Effect on thoſe who embrace it otherwiſe. The Reaſon of the Thing is the ſame in both Caſes, and any one may as juſtly ſet forth the Vanity and Inſignificancy of the Chriſtian Revelation, becauſe it does not ſave all its Profeſſors, as your Lordſhip expoſes the Weakneſs and Vanity of ſpiritual Cenſures, becauſe they do not abſolutely, and in all Caſes, throw People out of God's Favour.

I hope I have here ſaid enough, to vindicate the Authority and Effects of the ſpiritual Puniſhments of the Church, againſt all your Lordſhip has advanced againſt them.

I ſhall make an Obſervation or two more upon this Head, and then proceed to the other Parts of your Anſwer.

You ſay, the *inceſtuous* Corinthian *was never the more or the leſs in God's Favour for what was done in the Church* *. This Doctrine I have already confuted, and ſhall now only ſet this Paſſage in another Light. Let us ſuppoſe that you had ſaid, that *no Man is more in God's Favour for being rightly baptized by the Church.* Now if a Perſon is not more in God's Favour after he is rightly baptized by the Church, than he was before, then it is certain, that there is no need of Baptiſm by the Church; for any thing is ſufficiently proved needleſs or uſeleſs in Religion, if it neither procures nor loſes the Favour of

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 43.

God. This is undeniably certain, that if we are not more in the Favour of God for being duly baptized by the Church, than if we were not baptized at all, that then that Baptism is a *useless Trifle*.

Now this is the Doctrine which your Lordship has taught; for he that says the *incestuous Corinthian*, though justly turned out of the Church, *was neither the more or the less in God's Favour for what was done by the Church*; says likewise, that he who is duly baptized into Covenant with God by the Church, is never the more or the less in God's Favour for being duly baptized by the Church. For if it be a mere Trifle, and altogether insignificant to us, as to the Favour of God, to be turned out of the Church, by such an Authority; it must be as *mere* a *Trifle* to be admitted into the Church by the same Authority. So that he who declares the one, plainly declares the other: For this is evidently plain, that if nothing be *lost* as to the Favour of God, by our being duly turned out of the Church, that then nothing is *got* as to the Favour of God, by our being duly admitted into the Church.

For if our being in the Church was any Step towards God's Favour, or rendered us more acceptable to him, those Degrees of Favour and Acceptance must be certainly lost, by our losing that which was the Cause of them.

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He therefore who asserts it is a *Trifle* to be *turned* out of the Church, must also assert, that it is as fruitless and trifling a thing to be *admitted* into the Church. So that all your Lordship's Raillery and Contempt thrown upon *human Excommunications*, falls as directly upon *human Baptisms*; and makes them as truly fruitless Trifles without any Advantage, as it makes Excommunication a Trifle without any Punishment.

This therefore is the Sum of your new Religion, set up out of pure Tenderness to the Laity, to deliver them from the Weight and Burden of *Ordinances*; this is to be their Support against human *Excommunications*, human *Benedictions*, human *Baptisms*, &c. that whether before or after *Baptism*, whether before or after *Excommunication*, they are still the *same Children of God.*

Again, you say, *If it be supposed (as it sometimes is upon this Subject) that a Person behaves himself under the most undeserved Censures, with any degree of Impatience, Pride, or Stubbornes, and that this displeaseth Almighty God; it is plain that he incurs no part of that Displeasure, upon account of the* Sentence *of Men, but solely upon the account of his own* Behaviour; *it being his own Behaviour alone, and not the Sentence of Men, which has any such Effect.*

Here, my Lord, your *Philoſophy* is upon the ſtretch, and rather than a *Chriſtian* Inſtitution ſhould have any Force or Effect, you have let it run ſuch lengths, as to make even the Ten *Commandments* as mere Trifles as the *Sentence* of Men.

As for Inſtance; Suppoſe a Perſon ſhould tell a Friend that he had a great liking to ſome of his Neighbour's Goods, but that the eighth Commandment made him afraid to take them from him; if his Friend were but a Maſter of your *Philoſophy*, he might ſoon convince him of the Folly of ſuch a Fear. He might tell him, that *if it be ſuppoſed (as it ſometimes is ſuppoſed in this Caſe) that by his manner of taking Goods from his Neighbour, that he diſpleaſeth Almighty God; it is plain that he incurs no Part of that Diſpleaſure upon account of the Commandment, but ſolely upon the Account of his own Behaviour; it being his own Behaviour alone, and not the Commandment, which has any ſuch Effect.* He might alſo aſſure him, that the *Commandment itſelf* cannot hurt him, that he is not more or leſs in God's Favour, for what that Commandment *ſays*, but purely for what he himſelf *does*.

I now, my Lord, freely ſubmit it to the Judgment of common Senſe, whether your profound *Philoſophy*, does not as truly make void and ſet aſide the Force and Effect of the Commandment, as the *Effect* of Excommunication.

For

For it is plainly as reaſonable to tell a *Thief*, that the eighth Commandment cannot hurt him; that if he ſteals, it is not the Commandment, but his own Behaviour alone, which will have any Effect; as to declare, that an impenitent Offender is neither more or leſs in the Favour of God for what is done by the Church, becauſe even ſuppoſing God to be angry at him for his Behaviour towards the Sentence of the Church, yet it is not the Sentence, but his own Behaviour, which cauſes the Divine Diſpleaſure; therefore the Sentence, ſays your Lordſhip, is a Trifle without Effect. And therefore may it alſo be ſaid, that the eighth Commandment is a Trifle without Effect; for it is as true of the Commandment in this Senſe, and your Lordſhip is as much obliged to ſay that it is our Behaviour againſt the Commandment, and not the Commandment itſelf, which will raiſe God's Diſpleaſure, as to ſay it is our Behaviour under the Sentence, and not the Sentence itſelf, which brings God's Diſpleaſure upon us; ſo that it is undeniably plain, that if for this reaſon the Sentence of the Church be a Trifle without any Effect, that for the ſame reaſon the Commandment muſt be equally a Trifle, and equally without any Effect.

And now, my Lord, need we not heed the Commandments, becauſe it is not the Commandments themſelves which will have any Effect upon us? Why then are we to be ex-

horted, and preached up into a Contempt of the Sentence of the Church, becauſe it is not the Sentence itſelf will have any Effect upon us? Is it ſafe to ſin againſt the Authority of the Commandment, becauſe it is not the Commandment itſelf which can puniſh us? If not, where is the Senſe, or Reaſon, or Chriſtianity of telling us, that we need not heed the Sentence of the Church, becauſe the Sentence itſelf cannot puniſh us?

Suppoſe ſome High-Church-man had writ a Treatiſe againſt Stealing, and had carried the Matter ſo very far, as to talk of the fatal Effect which the eighth Commandment would have upon Offenders, when it ſhould riſe up in Judgment and condemn them.

Would your Lordſhip think yourſelf obliged, in regard to the *Liberty* of thoſe who want other People's *Goods*, to tell them, that indeed they ought to take care to act with Sincerity in their acquiring the temporal Things of this Life, that they ought to conſider with the utmoſt Impartiality the Nature of Property, and the Conditions of that *Original Contract*, which firſt ſettled the *Rights* and *Bounds* of it, and gave every Man a Right in ſuch or ſuch a Part of the Things of this Life; but that if they ſhould through *Impatience* of Want, or *Pride*, or any other Paſſion or Prejudice, make too free with their Neighbour's Property, and ſo diſpleaſe Almighty God; would you think your ſelf obliged

obliged to tell them, that *the fatal Effects of the eighth Commandment*, and its pretended rising up in Judgment hereafter, is all *Sham* and *Banter*; and that however God may be displeased with them, yet that Commandment will have no Effect upon them? Would your Love of Liberty, your Concern for the Laity, engage you to give so much Comfort, and preach such smooth things to such a Class of People?

Thus much may be fairly affirmed, that you might as well deliver such a sort of People from their Fear of the Commandment, as endeavour to perswade impenitent Offenders not to fear the Sentence of the Church. For as the Guilt of Stealing is aggravated by being contracted against the Authority of the eighth Commandment: so the Guilt of Impenitence is heightned, by a Continuance in it against that Authority in the Church, which is as truly founded by God to prevent the *Growth of Sin*, as the eighth Commandment was given by God to prevent *Stealing*. So that he who teaches Offenders to disregard this Sentence, which is authorized by God to awaken and terrify them into Repentance, does the same as if he should teach Thieves to disregard the eighth Commandment, which was given by God to affright People from stealing.

If it should be here objected, that there is a very great difference betwixt the Duty we owe to the

the eighth Commandment, and our Duty to the Sentence of the Church; becauſe the Commandment is always right and the ſame, whereas the Church may err in its Sentence.

To this it may be anſwered, that granting all this, that the Church may ſometimes err in its Sentence; yet if it is ever in the right, if it ever can be a fault, or dangerous for Sinners not to ſubmit to, and be corrected by it, this will condemn your Doctrine, which ſets it out conſtantly, and in all Circumſtances, as a Dream and Trifle, and without any Effect.

Secondly; Here is no room left for you to plead the Uncertainty of the Church's Sentence, in regard to the Certainty of the Commandment; becauſe you directly ſet forth your Doctrine in a Caſe (that of the inceſtuous *Corinthian)* where all was right and juſt, and yet declare that in that Caſe it was without any Effects; and that if the inceſtuous *Corinthian* had continued impenitent under it, and diſregarded it as long as he had lived, it had ſignified no more to him than if it had never been pronounced. And in this Caſe, my Lord, and upon this Suppoſition, that the Authority judges and condemns ſuch Sinners as it ought to do, it is as abominable to tell ſuch that they have nothing to fear from the Judgment of the Church, as to tell a Thief that he has nothing to fear from the eighth Commandment. And I here challenge all the

Reaſon

Reaſon which ever appeared againſt the Doctrines of Chriſtianity, to ſhow me, why it is not as agreable to the Scripture to declare, that if a *Thief* lives and dies in his Sins of Stealing, that he has nothing to fear from the eighth Commandment; as to declare that an impenitent Offender, though *juſtly* cenſured by the Authority of the Church, has nothing to fear from ſuch a Cenſure, though he lives and dies in the Contempt of it.

Thirdly and laſtly; Though the Church may ſometimes err in its Authority, and the Commandment is always right; yet your Doctrine makes it as reaſonable to declare the Commandment without any Effect, as to declare the Sentence of the Church to be without any Effect. For you do not ſay that Excommunication is a *Trifle without any Effect*, becauſe it is a Sentence which may ſometimes be wrong; but becauſe, though we ſhould diſpleaſe God under the Sentence of the Church, yet that Diſpleaſure would not have been occaſioned by the Sentence, but by our *Behaviour alone*. And this Doctrine plainly makes all the Commandments as mere *Trifles* and *void of all Effect*, as it makes the Sentence of the Church ſo. For it is as true in your Senſe, and you are as much obliged to ſay, that if we ſin againſt the Commandments, and incur the Diſpleaſure of God, that it is not the Commandments, but our Behaviour alone which cauſes it: And ſo the Commandments

ments of God have no more to do with the Favour of God, but are as mere *Dreams* without any Effect, as the human Excommunications you have ſo much expoſed. This, my Lord, is a very compendious Confutation both of the *Law* and the *Goſpel*; and is a good reaſon, why ſo many of thoſe who have no regard for either, but think *Zeal* in Religion a Meanneſs of Spirit, are yet great *Zealots* for your Lordſhip's Opinions.

Of Church-Authority, as it relates to external Communion.

YOUR Lordſhip ſays, *I know of no Church Authority to oblige Chriſtians to external Communion, nor any thing to determine them but their own Conſciences* *. But to ſhow your Deſire to be informed, your Lordſhip frequently calls upon the Learned *Committee* to declare what the Authority of the Church is. It is ſomething ſtrange, that you ſhould have been ſo long writing down the Authority of the Church, and yet not know what is meant by Church Authority; that you ſhould take ſo much pains to oppoſe (as you ſay) only

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 112.

abſolute

abſolute Authority, and yet not know whether there be any elſe, or what Authority you have left in the Church. It is yet ſomething ſtranger that a *Biſhop* of the Church, ſhould be frightening the *Laity* from a kind of Church Authority which is not claimed over them, and yet be at the ſame time pretendedly ignorant of what ſort of *Church Authority* they are under. Here you have been preaching againſt that, which they are not concerned with; but when you ſhould tell them *what kind* of Authority they are concerned with, you have not one word of Inſtruction; but call upon the *Committee* to declare, whether there be any ſuch thing as Church Authority which is not *abſolute*. My Lord, if there be not, to what purpoſe have you ſo often taken *Refuge* in the word *Abſolute?* Or where is the *Honeſty* or *Reaſon* of ſaying you have not denied *all* Authority, but only that which is *abſolute*, if you believe there is no Authority but what is *abſolute?* If therefore your Lordſhip has made this Diſtinction with *any* degree of *Sincerity*, if you intended any thing more by it, than an artful playing with Words; it plainly lies at your Door to ſhew what Authority you have not touched; and that in ſuppoſing that which is *abſolute*, you neither have, nor intended to oppoſe *all* Authority and Juriſdiction in Matters of Religion. But, inſtead of this, if the Learned *Committee* ſhould explain

plain to your Lordſhip what that Authority is, which is not *abſolute*; you only venture ſo far as to ſay, that if there is any ſuch Authority, *you are, for ought that you have ſaid, at liberty to declare for it* *. Mighty cautiouſly expreſſed, my Lord! Had a *Courtier*, who rather intends to *amuſe* than *inform*, and talk *artfully* than *ſincerely*, delivered himſelf in ſuch inconcluſive Terms, it had not been much Matter either of Wonder or Complaint. But for a *Biſhop*, who makes *Sincerity* to be of more worth than all the Chriſtian Religion; for this Biſhop, in a Cauſe which he declares himſelf ready to die in; in ſuch a Cauſe, as is of the laſt Conſequence to us all, as *Men*, *Chriſtians*, and *Proteſtants*; for this Biſhop to ſay, *if there be ſuch an Authority*, inſtead of declaring whether there is or not; and to ſay, *he is at liberty to declare for it*, inſtead of plainly ſaying whether he *ought or not*; however conſiſtent it may be with Sincerity, I am ſure it has too much the Appearance of the contrary.

For ſeeing you are charged with denying *all* Authority in the Church, if you conſulted Plainneſs and Sincerity, if you regarded the Information of the *Vulgar*, and the Peace of the Church, which way could theſe Conſiderations lead you to defend your ſelf; but either to ſhow that there was a real Autho-

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 25

rity

rity in the Church, which you had not oppoſed; or elſe plainly to own that you had denied *all Authority*, becauſe all Authority of every kind is to be denied? But inſtead of declaring your ſelf openly and plainly for the ſake of Truth, Peace, and Sincerity, you take Refuge in Words, and ſecure your ſelf behind a Cloud of *Properly's* and *Abſolutely's*, to the Diſturbance of honeſt Minds, and to the Satisfaction of the Prophane.

Since your Lordſhip calls out ſo often to be told *what* that Authority is which obliges us to *external Communion*, I ſhall beg leave to offer theſe following Conſiderations upon this Head, and hope they will ſufficiently both aſſert and explain that Church Authority or Obligation, which we are all under to join in external Communion.

Your Lordſhip ſays; *I know of no Church Authority to oblige any Chriſtians to external Communion; nor any thing to determine them, but their own Conſciences**. I ſhall therefore beg leave to obſerve to your Lordſhip, what *Authority* there is to oblige *All* Chriſtians to *external Communion*; and to ſhow, that they are no more left at liberty in this Matter, than they are at liberty to *ſteal* or *murder*.

I ſuppoſe it is not proper or true, to ſay, that you know of no Authority to oblige

* P. 112.

any

any Christians, or any thing to keep them from the Practice of Stealing, but their own Consciences; because there is the express Authority of God against this Practice. Now if it would be improper and false to say this, because the Authority of God has so plainly appeared in it; I shall easily prove, that it is as false and improper to say, that we have *nothing but our Consciences to determine us* in the Case of *external* Communion, since the Authority of God is as express in obliging us to this *external Communion*, as in requiring us to be just and honest in all our Dealings.

I desire no more to be granted me here, than that it is necessary to be a Christian, and that we are called upon by the *Authority* of God to embrace this Religion as necessary to Salvation. This, my Lord, is the express Doctrine of the Scriptures; so that I hope I may presume upon it, as granted by your Lordship, that there is an Authority to oblige People to be Christians, and that this Authority makes it as necessary, that they should be Christians, as it is necessary to obey God, and conform to his Will.

First; If Christianity be a Method of Life necessary to Salvation, then we are necessarily obliged to external Communion; for we can no other way appear to be Christians, either to our selves or others, but by this external Communion. A Person who lives in a *Cloyster*, may as well be taken for a *Field General*,

General, as he who is not in *external* Communion, for a Christian. For the Christian Religion is a Method of Worship distinct from all others, in those Offices and Duties which constitute external Communion; so that if you are so far obliged to be a Christian, as to serve God differently from other People, you are obliged to *external Communion*, because that Service which distinguishes the Christian Worshipper from all other People, is such a Service as cannot be performed but in an external Communion in such and such Offices, *viz. Professions of Faith, joint Prayers*, and the Observance of the *Sacraments*. *External* Communion is only another Word for the Profession of Christianity, because the several Duties and Obligations which concern any one as a Christian, and distinguish him from other People, are Duties which as necessarily imply *external Communion*, as walking implies Motion. Therefore to ask whether a Christian be obliged to *external Communion*, is to ask whether a Person who is obliged to walk, be obliged to move. The short is this; No Man can be a Christian, but by taking upon him the Profession of Christianity; the Profession of Christianity is nothing else but *external* Communion with Christians; therefore it is as necessary to be in external Communion, as to be a Christian.

I hope I need not prove to your Lordship, that there is an *Authority* to oblige People to

the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; intending here only to prove, that the ſame Authority obliges us to external Communion.

Had your Lordſhip therefore declared to the World, that you know of no Authority to oblige People to be Chriſtians, it had been as *innocent* and *true* a Declaration, as this you have made concerning *external Communion*; there being plainly the ſame Authority obliging us to the one, as to the other. For, my Lord, what is implied in external Communion, but our communicating with our Fellow Chriſtians in thoſe Acts of Worſhip and Divine Service which Chriſtianity requires of us? And what Marks or Tokens can we ſhew of our Chriſtianity, but that we are of the Number of thoſe who are baptized into Chriſt's Church, for the joint Worſhip of God in that particular Service which the Chriſtian Religion has taught us? So that if we prove our ſelves Chriſtians, we muſt prove our ſelves in this external Communion, becauſe to be a Chriſtian implies no more, than the being of the Number of thoſe who viſibly unite and join in ſuch Acts and Offices of Divine Worſhip, as are proper to Chriſtians. If therefore there be *no Authority* to oblige us to external Communion, then no one is obliged to be a Chriſtian.

Secondly; If there be *no Authority* to oblige, or *any thing* to determine Chriſtians to *external Communion* but their own Conſciences,

ſciences, then it is plain, it is as lawful for all Chriſtians to be their own *Prieſts*, and confine themſelves to a private Worſhip ſeparate from every Chriſtian in the World, as to join in external Communion. For where there is no Authority or Obligation to determine our Practice, there the thing muſt needs be indifferent; and to do it or let it alone, muſt be *equally* lawful. If there was no Authority which obliged us to be baptized, it would not only be *lawful* to let it alone, but *idle* to trouble our Heads about it. The ſame is true of this external Communion; if we are under no *Law* concerning it, it is no part of our *Duty* either to do it, or let it alone.

It cannot here be ſaid, that though we are not obliged to external Communion with this or that Church, yet we ought to join with ſome particular Perſons, and not worſhip God conſtantly by our ſelves, and perform no Offices with other People. For if we are obliged to communicate with any one Perſon in the World, we are to hold Communion with the whole Church of Chriſt. For we are not obliged to communicate with this or that particular Perſon on account of any *Civil* or *Natural* Relation, but as we are *Chriſtians*, and from the *Common Nature* of our Chriſtianity. Since therefore our Obligation to communicate with any particular Perſons, does not ariſe from any private *particular* Relation, but

from the *common Nature* of our Religion; this does equally oblige us to hold Communion with *all* Chriſtians, as with any *particular* Chriſtians, they being all equally related to us as Chriſtians; and conſequently it is as neceſſary to hold Communion with the external viſible Church, as with any particular Chriſtian. From this alſo it is plain, that it is as lawful to avoid Communion with every particular Chriſtian in the World, as to refuſe Communion with any ſound Part of the Church on Earth.

I beg of your Lordſhip to produce but one Argument, why any *two or three* ſhould meet together for the Service of God, which will not equally prove it neceſſary that Chriſtians ſhould join in external Communion. May it all be laid aſide, my Lord? Need there be no more of this *aſſembling* our ſelves together for performing of Duties, which we thought we could not perform ſeparately?

I have ſhown in my ſecond Letter, that your Lordſhip cannot conſiſtently with your Principles, urge any Reaſons to any *Diſſenters* to come over to the Church of *England*; and here, my Lord, it will appear, that you have not one Argument againſt the *Abſenters* from *all Publick Worſhip*. For it would be as odd and unreaſonable in your Lordſhip to offer any Argument to ſuch an *Abſenter*, why he ſhould join in ſome Publick Worſhip, after you have denied an Authority which obliges us

us to external Communion, as it would be for an *Atheiſt* who had denied the Neceſſity of *any* Religion, to perſuade a Man to be a *ſincere Mahometan*.

If your Lordſhip ſhould tell this *Abſenter* from all Communions, that he ought to join with ſome Communion or other in the Worſhip of God; might he not fairly ask your Lordſhip, how you came to tell the World that *you know of no Authority to oblige any Chriſtians*, or *any thing* to determine them to external Communion? Can any one be obliged to join in Divine Service, who is not obliged to *external Communion?* Could any one imagine that if he was not obliged to join in external Communion, that it was not lawful to ſtay at home? Could he think that when your Lordſhip was declaring againſt any Obligation to Church Communion, that you meant he ought to join himſelf with ſome of the Diſſenters? Had your Lordſhip plainly declared, that no Chriſtian need read *any Book* in the World, could you conſiſtently with your ſelf offer any Arguments why he ſhould read the *Bible?* Yet this is as conſiſtent, as to deſire any Perſon to communicate with any Body of Chriſtians, after you have plainly diſowned any Obligation to external Communion.

For whatever Arguments your Lordſhip can offer to an *Abſenter* from all Publick Worſhip, may be anſwered in this manner. " Either

" your Arguments for my joining with any " Chriſtians, are invented by your ſelf, and " of your own making, or they are not; if " they are Fictions of your Lordſhip's, and de- " ſtitute of any Foundation in the Will or " Authority of God, then they are vain and " to no Purpoſe; but that all ſuch Arguments " are mere Fictions and Inventions of your " own, is plain from your Lordſhip's expreſs " Declaration, that *you knew* of no *Autho-* " *rity*, *or any thing* to oblige or determine " Chriſtians to external Communion; ſo that " all the Arguments you can offer for my " external Communion, are declared by your " ſelf to be ſuch as are of *no Authority*, or " have *any thing* in them to *determine* me to " external Communion."

And indeed, had your Lordſhip firſt declared that there was no ſuch thing as *Figure* in *Bodies*, and then pretended to prove that the World is *round*, it would be no more miraculous, than firſt to give out, that no Chriſtians are obliged to external Communion, and afterwards take upon you to perſuade any one to join himſelf to ſome *Body* of Chriſtians. Here therefore your Lordſhip has ſo preached up and advanced this Kingdom of Chriſt, that conſiſtently with your ſelf, you cannot ſo much as require any one to be a viſible Member of it, or offer the leaſt Shadow of an Argument, why an Abſenter ſhould rather go to ſome Church, than truſt to his own Religion at home.

home. Your Lordſhip wrote a *Treatiſe* ſome Years ago on the *Reaſonableneſs of Conformity to the Church of* England. But pray, my Lord, where is the *Reaſonableneſs* of conforming, if we are under no *Obligation* to conform? Where is the Reaſonableneſs of doing that, which is not our *Duty* to do? Where can be the *Reaſonableneſs* of going two or three *Miles* to Church for the ſake of external Communion, if there be *no Authority, or any thing to determine us to external Communion?* Can it be *reaſonable* to ſpend our Time and ſome Part of our Wealth in making up ſuch Meetings, as God has not required at our Hands?

Your Lordſhip muſt either therefore retract what you have ſaid, and allow that there is *an Authority* to oblige us to external Communion, or acknowledge that no Chriſtians are under any *Obligations* to ſerve God in any Communion, but may confine themſelves to a private Religion, ſeparate from every other Chriſtian in the World. That is, that no one is *obliged* to worſhip God in the publick Aſſembly, or join with any one elſe in the Service of God.

Thirdly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to *external Communion*, then it may well be queſtioned, how your Lordſhip can anſwer for your joining in external Communion in the Church of *England*. Your Lordſhip knows that the Communion of the Church of

England, gives great Offence to the *Papiſt* and *Proteſtant* Diſſenters of all kinds; how then can your Lordſhip juſtify your doing that, which you need not do, which gives ſo much Scandal to ſo many *tender* Conſciences?

Will your Lordſhip be of a Church, though it is this very Church Communion that is ſo very offenſive? Your Lordſhip knows that the Animoſities and Church Diviſions amongſt Chriſtians is one of the moſt ſore Evils under the Sun; that all the Party Heats and Controverſies are concerning whom we are to communicate with, and in Defence of particular external Communions. Now, my Lord, what ſhould that Chriſtian do, who is all *Sincerity*, who believes there is no *Obligation* to external Communion, and who ſees that the *pretended Neceſſity* of it, cauſes all the Difference and Diviſion amongſt Chriſtians? Can that *ſincere* Perſon who believes and knows all this, keep at the *Head* of a particular Communion? Can he ſupport ſo *unneceſſary*, ſo *needleſs* an Evil? Can that *ſincere* Perſon be a *Biſhop* in that Communion, which ſtands diſtinguiſhed from other external Communions, chiefly as it is *epiſcopal Communion*, when he allows there is no Neceſſity of being in Communion either with *Biſhops* or *any body* elſe? Could that *Pope* be reckoned *ſincere*, who ſhould declare that he knew of no Authority, or any thing to determine him to exerciſe the *papal* Powers, could he be a ſincere Chriſtian,

if

if he yet continued to exercise them to the *Scandal* and *Offence* of so many Christian Countries? If he could, so might your Lordship for continuing at the Head of an external Communion, which divides and disturbs Christians, though you know of *no Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine you* to this external Communion.

Surely your Lordship will have more Compassion at last for your *dissenting Brethren*, more Concern for the Peace of Christ's Kingdom, than to keep up such unnecessary Communions, and disturb so many weak Consciences, by joining externally in the Church of *England*, when you *know of no Authority, or any thing to oblige you* to join with any Body.

Suppose the Peace of *Great Britain* was miserably destroyed by *Party* Rage and Dispute about the *Stars*. Would your Lordship head one Party of *Star-gazers* against another? Would you join your self to such a vain and useless Cause at the Expence of the publick Peace? Now, my Lord, if there be *nothing* to *oblige* us to *external Communion*, it is all a *Trifle*, and mere *Star-gazing*; and a Person who appears in the Cause, and at the Head of this external Communion, can be no more a Friend to Christianity, by keeping up such an unnecessary Cause of Division, than he could be a good Subject, who should join in the needless idle Quarrels of *Star-gazing Party-*

Party-men. In a Word, if your Lordſhip knows of any thing that obliges you to continue in the Church of *England*, you ought not to have ſaid that *you know of no Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine any Chriſtian to external Communion:* But if you know of nothing that obliges you to continue in the Church of *England*, then you ought rather to leave it, than to bear a part in ſo needleſs a Community, and which gives ſo much Offence to all thoſe who diſlike the Terms of it.

Fourthly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to external Communion, how comes there to be ſuch a Sin as *Schiſm?* How comes the *Schiſmatic*, or Divider of Communions, to be ſo frequently in the Scriptures ranked amongſt the moſt guilty Offenders?

Can it be a Sin to be divided, unleſs we are under ſome Obligation to be united?

It has been always granted that *Schiſm* is the Separation of our ſelves from ſuch a Communion of Chriſtians, as we *ought* to have held Communion with. Now if ſeparate Worſhip from any Chriſtians in the World be the Sin of *Schiſm*, then there muſt be ſome Law that obliges thoſe *Schiſmatics* to join with thoſe Chriſtians, from whom they ſeparate, and conſequently there is an Authority which obliges Chriſtians to external Communion.

Your Lordſhip muſt either ſhow that *Schiſm* does not conſiſt in refuſing to communicate with

with ſome Chriſtians, or that though it be the damnable Sin of Schiſm to refuſe Communion with ſome Chriſtians, yet there is no Authority to oblige us to external Communion with any Chriſtians; *i. e.* that though Schiſm be a Sin, yet it is the Tranſgreſſion of no Law.

The Apoſtle ſays, *Mark thoſe who cauſe Diviſions contrary to the Traditions which ye have learned of me, and avoid them.* My Lord, what ſtrange Language is this, if there is nothing to oblige us to external Communion? If there is no Obligation to be united, why muſt they be marked who cauſe Diviſions? If there be no Authority that requires external Communion at our Hands, why muſt thoſe Perſons be avoided who prevent external Communion?

Either the Apoſtle, or your Lordſhip muſt be mightily miſtaken; the Apoſtle tells us that *Diviſions* in the Church are contrary to the Doctrine which he had taught, and therefore there is the expreſs Authority of the Apoſtle to oblige us to external Communion. But your Lordſhip ſays there is no Authority to oblige us to this Duty, therefore you muſt either maintain that the Apoſtle taught no ſuch Doctrine, though he ſaid he had, or that there is no Authority in his Doctrine to oblige us.

I ſuppoſe, my Lord, that the Apoſtle by Diviſions here means *external viſible Diviſions*, becauſe he bids them *mark* thoſe who cauſe them, and *avoid* them; for *inviſible* internal

internal Diviſions can no more be *marked*, or inviſible Schiſmatics *avoided*, than we can mark Peoples Thoughts, or lock out a *Spirit*. If therefore the Diviſion here ſpoken of be external Diviſion, then the Sin here condemned is a Breach of external Communion, and conſequently we are here required by the Apoſtle to join in external Communion; unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that the Apoſtle could condemn thoſe who were *externally divided*, without meaning that they ought to be *externally united*.

Fifthly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to external Communion, then there is no *Authority* to oblige us to be baptized. For Baptiſm is an external viſible Ordinance of God, which as plainly implies external Communion with others, as any Contract in the World implies Correſpondence with others. And any Perſon might as well be obliged to bargain and merchandize with others, without being obliged to be concerned with others, as be obliged to be baptized, without being obliged to external Communion.

For as we cannot baptize our ſelves, this ſhows that the Chriſtian Religion is not ſuited to the State of ſingle independent Perſons, but requires our external Communion to the Performance of its Obligations. And as we cannot be baptized by others, but by reſigning up our ſelves to the Obſervance of new Laws, this plainly proves that the Perſon is baptized into

into a State of *Society* and external Communion. That Baptiſm does not leave the baptized Perſon to a ſeparate independent Worſhip, is very plain from the following Inſtances.

The Church of *England*, in the Office for Baptiſm, thus expreſſes her ſelf: *We receive this Perſon into the Congregation of Chriſt's Flock*, &c. Again, *Seeing now —— This Perſon is regenerated and grafted into the Body of Chriſt's Church*, &c. I ſhould think it very plain, my Lord, to every Reader, that theſe Paſſages ſhow that Baptiſm neceſſarily implies external Communion, and puts it out of the Power of every baptized Perſon to refuſe external Communion, unleſs he will break through the Conditions of his Baptiſm. For can we be *received into the Congregation of Chriſt's Flock*, without being obliged to keep up this Congregation, or to perform any Duties or Offices conſidered as a Congregation or Flock? Can we in any Senſe be conſidered as a Congregation or a Flock, but in our Communion in thoſe Offices which ſhew us to be Chriſt's Flock? Can we be ſaid to be grafted into the Body of Chriſt's Church, if we are at liberty never to meet as a Church, or act as a Church?

The Apoſtle ſays, For *by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body* *. What can

* 1 *Cor.* 12. 13.

more

more manifeſtly denote external Communion, than this Account of Baptiſm? Can we be baptized into one Body, and not be obliged to act as a Body? Can we act as a Body, by running away from one another, and refuſing to unite in that Service, into which we are baptized? I ſuppoſe we are here to be conſidered as a *Chriſtian Body*; but how a Number of People can be a Chriſtian Body, who are not united in Chriſtian Worſhip, is hard to conceive.

When therefore you declare that you know of *no Authority* to oblige Chriſtians to external Communion, you deſert the Doctrines of Chriſt, as plainly as if you ſaid, that you know of no Authority which obliges People to be baptized.

Sixthly; If there be no Authority to *oblige*, nor any thing to *determine* us to external Communion, then there is no Authority to oblige, nor any thing to determine us to communicate in the bleſſed *Sacrament* of the Body and Blood of Chriſt. For if there is any Law which obliges us to join externally in the Obſervance of this *Inſtitution*, then it is out of all doubt, that we are obliged to external Communion. Now if you will ſay that there is no Law of God as to this Matter, then the thing itſelf muſt needs be indifferent, and *private Maſs* muſt be allowed to be as right and lawful, as a joint Communion in the Holy Sacrament. Either therefore you muſt

muſt defend *private Maſs*, or ſhow ſome Authority againſt it; if you can produce any Authority againſt it, then you produce an Authority for external Communion, and contradict your other Declaration, where you give out, that you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion.

From all this it plainly appears, what *kind* of Authority that is, which obliges us to external Communion; it is that *ſame* Authority which obliges us to be *baptized*, to receive the *Communion*, to profeſs the *ſame* Faith, to worſhip God in the publick Aſſemblies, and to avoid the Sin of *Schiſm*; or, in a word, that ſame Authority which obliges us to be *Chriſtians*.

For all the Offices of Chriſtian Worſhip and Devotion which *conſtitute* external Communion, are every one *expreſsly* required by God; and therefore *external Communion*, which conſiſts only of theſe Offices, is *equally* required by God.

And this Authority may be very juſtly called *Church Authority*, becauſe it ariſes from the very Nature of the *Church*, becauſe it is the *Inſtitution* of the Church, from whence this Obligation to Communion ariſeth. For Chriſt has inſtituted this Church, in order to oblige Mankind to enter into it for the Salvation of their Souls: As the Church therefore is inſtituted for this End, the *Exiſtence* of the Church lays an Obligation upon all,

all, who have any Opportunity, of entering into it; and this Obligation will laſt as long as the Church of Chriſt ſhall laſt. The ſhort is this; God has inſtituted an *Order* or *Society* of People, for the *particular* manner of ſerving and worſhipping him; this Society is not a *voluntary* one, which we may be Members of, or not, as we pleaſe; but it carries, in its very *Nature* and *Inſtitution*, an Authority obliging us all, as we hope for Happineſs, to be Members of it; we are obliged to be of the Church, becauſe Chriſt has *inſtituted* the Church; therefore it is the *Inſtitution* of the Church, which lays us under an Obligation of entering into it; and this, and no other, is that *Church Authority* which obliges all People to *external Communion*.

Farther; This may be very properly called Church Authority, becauſe it was in the *Church*, or that *Order* of Men, which Chriſt had inſtituted, before the Scriptures were written.

When there was only this Order of Men, before the Writings of the *New Teſtament* were in being, there was then this Authority ariſing from that *inſtituted* Order of Men, which obliged others to enter into Communion with them; therefore this Authority which began with the Exiſtence of the Church, and flowed from the very *Nature* of the Church, may very juſtly be called *Church Authority*.

If

If it ſhould be aſked, whether this Authority be *abſolute?* I anſwer, it is juſt as *abſolute*, as that Authority which obliges us to be baptized. Our Saviour has told us, that *if we are not baptized, we ſhall be damned:* Here therefore is an *Authority* for Baptiſm; the Scripture has not ſaid whether this be ſo *abſolutely* obliging, that there is no room in any Caſe for a Diſpenſation; therefore it is no Caſe which concerns us. Now the *Authority* which obliges us to *external Communion*, is juſt upon the *ſame Terms*; the thing is as plainly required as *Baptiſm*; but whether in *any Caſes* it will be diſpenſed with, is what we have nothing to do with. If there be any *Sincerity*, any *Weakneſs*, any *Ignorance*, or the *Want* of any thing which will excuſe thoſe who refuſe to be *baptized*, thoſe *ſame* Conſiderations may excuſe the Refuſal of *external Communion* with the Church.

This, my Lord, is the *Nature* of that *Church Authority*, which obliges to *external Communion*; it is that very *ſame* Authority which obliges us to the Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, or to enter into Covenant with God. For he who is in external Communion with the Church of Chriſt, is of the Church of Chriſt, or in Covenant with God; and he who is not in external Communion, is not of the Church of Chriſt, nor in Covenant with God; and conſequently it is that *ſame* Authority which obliges us to be Chriſtians,

or in Covenant with God, which obliges us to external Communion.

So that when you ſay, you *know of no Church Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine People to external Communion*, it is directly ſaying, that you know of no Church Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine them to the *Profeſſion* of Chriſtianity, or to enter into *Covenant* with God.

If your Lordſhip ſhould here ſay, that you only meant, you know of no *human* Authority to oblige People to external Communion, *&c.*

To this it may be anſwered, that you might as well have meant nothing at all by it, as have meant this. For,

Firſt; Suppoſe the Queſtion had been, whether there be any Authority, or what Authority it is, which obliges People to be *baptized?* and that in order to ſettle this Point, you had here declared, that *you know of no Church Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine them to be baptized, but their own Conſciences.*

Could it be thought, my Lord, after this, that you had not denied *all Authority* for Baptiſm? Could it be ſuppoſed, that by this Declaration, you only meant to deny, that the Authority which obliges us to be baptized, is *Human* or *Civil* Authority? Could any one who only meant thus much, expreſs himſelf in this manner?

Yet

Yet thus it is, that you have expreſſed your ſelf in the Diſpute concerning our Obligations to external Communion, you *know of no Church Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine People to it*; which makes it equally abſurd to ſuppoſe, that you only deny that our Obligation to *external* Communion ariſes from *any human* or *civil* Authority.

Secondly; If you only meant to deny an *human* or *civil* Authority in this Matter, how came you not to ſay ſo? How came you not to tell us what *Divine* or *Scripture* Authority there is to oblige us? Is it not as proper and as neceſſary in a Diſpute about *this* Authority, to declare the true and right Authority, as to proteſt againſt the wrong Authority? But indeed nothing can be more trifling than to ſay, that you have only denied any *human* or *civil* Authority in this Matter.

For, my Lord, whoever imagined that our Obligations to profeſs Chriſtianity, that is, to be Members of Chriſt's Church, could proceed from any human Authority? Human Authority may and ought to encourage us in the Practice of our Chriſtian Duties; but that our Obligation to ſerve God as Chriſtians, that is, in the external Communion of the Church, ſhould ariſe from any human Authority, can be ſuppoſed by none, but thoſe who imagine Chriſtianity to be a Creature of the *State*.

Thirdly; You not only ſay that you know of no *Church Authority* to oblige, but alſo add theſe Words, *nor any thing to determine People to external Communion, but their own Conſciences.*

Now, my Lord, if you only meant to deny a *human* Authority in this Matter; if you intended to own a *Divine* Authority to oblige us to external Communion; how come you to expreſs your ſelf thus contrary to your Meaning? For if you believe there is a *Scripture* or *Divine* Authority which obliges us to external Communion, ſurely this *Authority* is *ſomething*, and has *ſome* Right to *determine* us to external Communion; yet you expreſsly ſay that you do not know of *any thing* to determine Chriſtians to external Communion.

If it was aſked, whether Chriſtians are obliged to *pray* for their *Enemies*, and you ſhould anſwer, I do not know *any* thing to determine them to pray for their Enemies; would it not be *Nonſenſe*, and *Contradiction* after this Declaration, to ſuppoſe, that you acknowledge that the Scriptures require Chriſtians to pray for their Enemies?

But to ſuppoſe, that you acknowledge a *Divine* or *Scripture* Authority which obliges to external Communion, after you have expreſsly declared that you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion, is *equally* contradictory.

Laſtly;

Laſtly; You ſay you do not know *of any thing to determine Chriſtians to external Communion, but their own Conſciences.*

Now this farther ſhews, that you deny all *Divine* as well as *Human* Authority to determine us to external Communion. For if there was a Divine Law which required this Practice, we are no more left ſolely to our own Conſciences in this Practice, than if it was determined by an expreſs human Law.

For can it be ſaid that the *Jews* had nothing but their own Conſciences to determine them to *abſtain* from *Blood?* Can it be ſaid that *Chriſtians* have nothing but their own Conſciences to determine them to receive the *Holy Sacrament?* If this cannot be ſaid, becauſe there is a Divine Law in both theſe Caſes; then it is as falſe and abſurd to ſay, that there is nothing but our own Conſciences to determine us to external Communion, if there be a *Divine* Authority which requires this Practice. And conſequently, you have plainly denied all *Divine* or *Scripture* Authority for external Communion, when you ſay that you do not know of *any thing to determine People to external Communion, but their own Conſciences.* The ſhort is this; if you will ſay, that you own a *Divine* and *Scripture* Authority which obliges us to external Communion; and if you will allow this Authority to be *ſomething*,

then your Contradiction in this Matter, is as palpable and groſs as ever appeared in any Writings; for you have expreſsly ſaid, that you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion: But if you own a Scripture Authority that obliges us to external Communion, then your Contradiction proceeds thus, that you do know of *ſomething*, but you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion. If you will not aſſert both Parts of this Contradiction, then you muſt ſtand to that which you have aſſerted, *viz.* that you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion, which I have already ſhown, is the ſame thing as declaring, you know of no Authority, or *any thing* to determine People to profeſs Chriſtianity, or enter into Covenant with God. But to proceed,

If you ſhould ſay that you do not deny an *Authority* that obliges us to external Communion in *general*, but only an *Authority* that can *oblige* us to any *particular* external Communion.

To this I anſwer, that this is a groundleſs, falſe Diſtinction; for our *Obligation* to external Communion with the Church of Chriſt in *general*, and our *Obligation* to external Communion with this or that *particular* Church, is exactly *one* and the *ſame* Obligation.

For we are not obliged to join with this or that *particular* Church, for any *private*, *particular*

ticular Reaſons, but becauſe we are obliged to be Chriſtians, or of the Church of Chriſt. And as no ſound Part of Chriſt's Church, is more his Church than another ſound part, ſo if we ſeparate from any ſound part, we are as truly out of Chriſt's Church, as if we had ſeparated from every part. And we can give no Reaſons for ſeparating from ſuch a part, but ſuch as will equally juſtify our ſeparating from every part of Chriſt's Church; and conſequently there can be no Reaſons offered why we ſhould be Chriſtians, or of the Church of Chriſt, but will equally oblige us to enter into that particular part of Chriſt's Church which offers itſelf to us. For the whole Intent of entering into this or that *particular* Church, is only to be a Chriſtian, or of the Church of Chriſt, and therefore it muſt be one and the ſame Authority which obliges us to be Chriſtians, that obliges us alſo to be of any *particular* Church.

There is a *Scripture Authority* which obliges us to forgive our *Enemies:* Now it would be as *proper* to ſay, that though there is an Authority which obliges us to *forgive* our Enemies in *general*, yet that Authority does not oblige us to forgive our *particular* Enemies, as to ſay, that though we are obliged to be of the Church of Chriſt in *general*, yet we are not obliged to be of this or that particular part of Chriſt's Church.

For the Church of Chriſt in *general*, as truly conſiſts of theſe *particular Parts*, as our Enemies in *general*, conſiſt of our *particular* Enemies.

So that, as it is *one* and the *ſame* Authority which obliges us to forgive our *Enemies*, that obliges us to forgive our *particular* Enemies, ſo it is *one* and the *ſame* Authority that obliges us to be *Chriſtians*, that obliges us alſo to communicate with that *particular* ſound part of Chriſt's Church where we live.

There is therefore no room for this Diſtinction, to ſuppoſe, that though we may be obliged to be of Chriſt's Church, yet we are not obliged to be of this or that *particular* ſound part of Chriſt's Church; it being fully as abſurd, as to ſuppoſe that we may be obliged to be Chriſtians, and yet not be obliged to be Chriſtians.

When therefore you declare, that you know of no *Church Authority* to oblige, *or any thing* to determine us to *external Communion*, it will be to no purpoſe to ſay, that you do not mean *Communion* with the Church of Chriſt in *general*, but only with any *particular* part of Chriſt's Church; for I have ſhown that this Diſtinction is *falſe*, and fully as *abſurd*, as to imagine, that we may be obliged to obey Chriſt's Commands in *general*, but not be obliged to obey his *particular* Commands.

From

From what has been ſaid upon this Subject, theſe following Propoſitions are plainly true:

Firſt; That as our entering into any particular part of the Church, implies our entering into the Church of Chriſt, or in other Words, our embracing Chriſtianity; it evidently follows, that the *ſame* Authority which requires us to embrace *Chriſtianity*, requires us alſo to enter into that found *part* of Chriſt's Church where we live.

Secondly; That this Authority does not ariſe from any *human* Laws, or the Power which any Men in what Station ſoever have over others, but is the Authority of God, who has inſtituted this Church, in order to oblige all Mankind to enter into it.

Thirdly; That this Authority from God, may be very properly called *Church Authority*, becauſe God manifeſted this Authority to the World by the *Inſtitution* of the Church, becauſe it began with the Church, and flowed from its very Nature; Mankind being therefore obliged to enter into this Church, becauſe there was ſuch a Church *inſtituted* by God.

Fourthly; That this Account does not in the leaſt make it either *unjuſt* or *improper*, in our *ſpiritual* or *temporal* Governours, to make Laws for our Conformity to this or that part of Chriſt's Church; for though the Authority which makes it neceſſary that we

ſhould

ſhould enter into ſuch a *part* of Chriſt's Church, is from God, yet this no more excludes our Governours from requiring the *ſame thing* by their *Laws*, than they are excluded from requiring us to obſerve any *moral Duties*, becauſe the *ſame moral Duties* are made neceſſary by the Authority of God. And as our Violation of any *moral Duties* that are commanded, both by Divine and Human Laws, receives an higher Aggravation, ſo the Guilt of oppoſing any ſound part of Chriſt's Church is enhanced, by our breaking through the Laws both of God and Man.

Fifthly; From this Account of the Authority which obliges us to external Communion, it will be very eaſy to diſcover the *Weakneſs* and *Fallacy* of ſeveral of your Lordſhip's Arguments upon this Matter.

Thus when you ſay, *It is evident that there is no Choice of Judgment left to Chriſtians, where there is a ſuperior Authority to oblige them*;——*that in* Italy, *or* Spain, *or* France, *they are as much obliged by the Church Authority in* Italy, Spain, *or* France, *as Chriſtians in* England *are obliged to a particular external Communion in* England, *by any human Authority, as ſuch, in* England *.

Now, my Lord, what could you have thought of leſs to the Purpoſe, than theſe Words thus put together? For does any one

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 115.

ſay,

ſay, that our Obligation to be of the Church of *England*, ariſes from any *human* Authority, *as ſuch*, in *England?* No, my Lord, if *human* Authority ſhould not only deſert the Church, but make the ſevereſt Laws againſt it, yet we ſhould be ſtill under the ſame Neceſſity of communicating with it; becauſe that Neceſſity is independent of *human* Laws, is founded upon the Authority of God, and conſtantly obliges in the *ſame Degree*, let the Laws of the *State* be what they will.

Granting therefore, my Lord, that the *human* Authority, *as ſuch*, in *France* or *Spain*, obliges the People of thoſe Kingdom to conform to thoſe Churches, as truly as the Laws of *England* oblige the People of *England* to conform to the Church of *England*. What follows? Does it follow that therefore the People of *France* or *Spain* are as truly obliged to Communion with the Church in thoſe Kingdoms, as the People of *England* are obliged to Communion with the Church in *England?* No, this will by no means follow; for ſince we ſhould hold the ſame Neceſſity of joining with the *Epiſcopal* Church in *England*, though all the human Laws in *England* ſhould forbid us; ſince we allow only an *accidental* and *conditional* Authority in *human* Laws as they eſtabliſh any particular Religion, it follows, that in *France* and *Spain*, &c. they ought to pay the *ſame* regard to *human* Laws, and no more continue in their Church

becauſe

becauſe it is *eſtabliſhed*, than we ought to leave our Church though it was *perſecuted*. The ſhort is this:

The *Church Authority* which obliges us to external Communion with any *particular* part of Chriſt's Church, is that *ſame divine* Authority which calls upon us to be *baptized*, and enter into *Covenant* with God.

Now if *human* Laws, whether of *Church* or *State*, ſtrike in with this Authority, then they oblige us, as they do in other Caſes, where they require us to do that, which the *Laws* of God required before; but if *human* Laws, whether of *Church* or *State*, require us to enter into *ſuch* a Communion, as hath not the *Authority* of Chriſt for it, or forbid our joining with *ſuch* a Communion as is a *true part* of Chriſt's Church, ſuch Laws are no more to be obſerved, than if they had eſtabliſhed *Idolatry*, or forbid the Worſhip of the *true* God. For *human* Laws are not ſuppoſed to make it our *Duty* to enter into ſuch a Communion, but are applied as proper *means* to induce us to do that, which the *Laws* of God had made it our *Duty* to do before. And it is undeniably true, that though there ſhould be ever ſo many *human* Laws to command us to enter into any particular Communion, that we muſt not comply with ſuch Laws, unleſs it be in regard to *ſuch* a Communion, as it was our *Duty* to enter into, though no ſuch *human* Laws were in being.

So

So that *human* Laws create no *Neceſſity* of external Communion, any more than they create the *Neceſſity* of *praying* to God; but they may be applied as very *proper means* to induce People to perform the *Duty* of *external* Communion, and to perform the Duty of *Prayer* to God.

The Queſtion therefore in any *Country* is not this, whether the Laws either of their *Church* or *State* require us to enter in *ſuch* a Communion, but whether it be *ſuch* a Communion, as it would be our *Duty* to enter into, were there no *human* Laws to enjoin it, whether it be a *part* of Chriſt's Church, which we are obliged to enter into on Pain of everlaſting Damnation.

When therefore you ſay, if the People of *England* are obliged by an *human* Authority, *as ſuch*, to enter into the Church of *England*, then the People of *France*, *Spain* and *Italy*, are as truly obliged by the human Authority there to enter into thoſe particular Communions; you ſay exceedingly true, but to no more purpoſe, than if you had made the following Declaration.

If the People of *England* are obliged to enter into Communion with the Church of *England* by any *Military* Authority, *as ſuch*; then the People of *France*, *Spain*, and *Italy*, are obliged to Communion with the Churches in *Spain*, *France*, and *Italy*, by the *Military* Authority, *as ſuch*, in *Spain*, *France*, and *Italy*.

This,

This, my Lord, is as much to the Purpoſe as what you have ſaid; for our *Obligation* to enter into a particular Part of Chriſt's Church, is no more founded in any *human* Laws, *as ſuch*, than in any *Military* Authority, *as ſuch*; but is founded in the Will of God, who has inſtituted the Church on Earth, and made our Salvation depend upon our Entrance into it. This is the *Authority* which obliges, this is the *Neceſſity* which lies upon us, to enter into any Part of Chriſt's Church.

If therefore you would ſhow, that in *Spain*, or *France*, &c. they are under the *ſame Neceſſity* of being of the Church in thoſe Kingdoms, which the People of *England* are of being Members of the *Epiſcopal* Church in *England*; you ought to ſhow that the *Eſtabliſhed* Church in *Spain*, or in *France*, is as truly a *ſound* Part of the Church of Chriſt, as the *Eſtabliſhed* Church in *England* is a ſound Part of the Church of Chriſt; and that the way of Worſhip *there*, is as certainly that *neceſſary Method* of Salvation which Chriſt has *inſtituted*, as the way of Worſhip in the Church of *England*, is that *neceſſary Method* of Salvation which Chriſt has inſtituted.

For this is the only *Authority* or *Neceſſity*, which obliges us to enter into any *Church* in any Part of the World; namely, a *Neceſſity* of being Chriſtians, by entering into that Church which Chriſt has inſtituted; ſo that

if

if this ſame Church be in *Spain*, and *France*, and *England*, then there is an *equal* Neceſſity of being of the Church in each Kingdom; but if the Church in *Spain* be not the Church which Chriſt has *inſtituted*, and the Church in *England* be that Church which Chriſt has *inſtituted*, then there is as great a *Neceſſity* of *refuſing* to communicate with the Church in *Spain*, as of joining in Communion with the Church of *England*.

This therefore being the Nature of the *Authority* or *Neceſſity* which obliges to external Communion, nothing can be more trifling, than to argue from the *Neceſsity* of complying with the Church in *one* Kingdom, to a *Neceſsity* of complying with the Church in *all other* Kingdoms; unleſs you could *demonſtrate*, that becauſe the *Eſtabliſhed* Church in one Kingdom is the true Church of Chriſt, therefore the *Eſtabliſhed* Church in *every other* Kingdom is the true Church of Chriſt.

Yet your Lordſhip has ſpent a great many Pages, in declaiming againſt any *Authority* or *Neceſsity* which can oblige People to communicate with the Church of *England*; becauſe then there would be the *ſame Neceſsity* that the People of *Spain*, and *France*, and *Italy*, ſhould communicate with the Church in thoſe Kingdoms. But I hope the moſt ordinary Reader will be able to tell your Lordſhip, that there is no more *good Senſe*, much leſs *Divinity*, in this way of inſtructing the World,

World, than if you had ſaid, there is no *Neceſsity* that the People of *England* ſhould believe things which are *true*, becauſe then the People of *Spain* will be under the *ſame Neceſſity* of believing things which are *falſe*; and again, that there is no *Neceſsity* that in *this* Kingdom we ſhould comply with *good Laws*, becauſe in *other* Kingdoms People will be under the *ſame Neceſsity* of complying with *wicked Laws*.

But to conclude this Point; I have here ſtated the Nature of that *Authority* or *Neceſſity* which obliges us to external Communion, that it does not ariſe from the *Laws* of any Men, whether in *Church* or *State*, but from the Will and Authority of Chriſt, who has inſtituted ſuch external Communion, as a *neceſſary Method* of Salvation.

I have ſhown alſo, that *human Laws*, though they, *as ſuch*, do not create a Neceſſity of external Communion, yet they have a very proper *Significancy*, and are as uſeful in this Matter, as in any other Parts of our Duty.

Of Sincerity and Private Judgement.

IF you ſhould here ſay, that by denying the Neceſſity of external Communion to ariſe from *human* Laws, *as ſuch*, I have reſolved the Choice of a particular Communion into *private Judgement*.

To this I anſwer;

Firſt; That by entering into any *particular Communion*, we are to underſtand the *ſame thing* as entering into the *Church of Chriſt*, or embracing the Religion which Chriſt has *inſtituted*.

Secondly; That when Chriſt came into the World, People were left to their choice, whether they would embrace Chriſtianity.

Thirdly; That Chriſtianity is ſtill upon the *ſame Terms* with Mankind, and it is ſtill left to every one's private Judgment, whether he will comply with the Terms of Salvation.

Fourthly; That this does not deſtroy the *Force* and *Obligations* of Authority, or make it without any Effect upon the Condition of Men. For it does by no means follow, that there is *no Authority*, or that there are *no Effects* to be feared from ſuch Authority, be-

cauſe Men may diſown it if they pleaſe. For to ſay there is *nothing* in Authority, that it is inſignificant and without *any Effect* upon the Condition of Men, if they may uſe their *private Judgements*, is as *ridiculous* as to ſay, there is *nothing* in the Happineſs of *Heaven*, or Torments of *Hell*, that they can have *no Effect* upon the Condition of Men, becauſe Men may *judge* of theſe things as they pleaſe.

Fifthly; There is a Choice of Judgment left to us in every Part of our Duty;

Whether we will believe a God,

Whether we will worſhip him,

Whether we will believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*,

Whether we will acknowledge a World to come,

Whether we will believe there is ſuch a Place as Hell.

And now, my Lord, is there *no Authority* for theſe things, becauſe we are not forced to believe them againſt our *Judgements*? Have thoſe who refuſed to believe in Chriſt, nothing to fear from his *Authority*, becauſe he appealed to their *Reaſon*, and left them to *determine* for themſelves? Is there no *Authority* for the Torments of *Hell*, or nothing to be feared from that *Authority*, by thoſe who deny there is any ſuch Place.

Now if there can be an *Authority* in theſe Matters, though the Uſe of *private Judgement* is allowed in theſe *ſame* Matters, if this Authority

thority will condemn those who acted contrary to it; then it is certain, that there may be an *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges us to be of such a *particular* Religion, though the Exercise of our private Judgment is allowed in the Choice of our Religion; and that we may have as much to fear from acting contrary to such *Authority*, though by following our own Opinions, as they have who act contrary to the Will of God in any other Respect, though by following their own Opinions.

So that an *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges us to be of this or that *particular Communion*, that is, particular Religion, is as consistent with the Exercise of *private Judgement*, as the Necessity of believing a God, and worshipping him, is consistent with the Exercise of our *private Judgement*.

And if you will say, there is an end of all Authority, if Men may chuse one Communion before another; you must also say, that if Men might consider whether they should follow Christ, then there was an end of all Authority in Christ over them.

And again; If Men may reason and consider whether there be a God, or Providence, then there is an end of all Necessity of believing either a God, or Providence.

If they may *consider* whether the Scriptures are the *Word* of God, or any *particular* Doctrines be contained in Scripture, then there is an end of *all Necessity* of believing the

Scriptures to be the *Word* of God, or of believing any *particular* Doctrines to be contained in Scripture.

If they may consider and examine whether any *particular* Religion comes from God, then there is an end of *all Necessity* of receiving any particular Religion from God.

All this Reasoning is full as just, as to conclude that there is an *end of all Authority* to *oblige People to any* particular Communion, if they may consider the Excellency of one Communion above another, which is what you over and over declare.

Now, my Lord, let us suppose that the Question was, Whether it be *necessary* to believe the *Scriptures* to be the *Word* of God? Would it not become every honest Man, not only to assert this *Necessity*, but to show wherein it is founded, and explain to every one that *Authority*, which calls upon us to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, and which will rise up in *Judgment* against us, if neglected.

And what might we not justly think of him, who, instead of showing the *Authority* or Necessity which obliges us to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, should deliver himself in this manner.

" You are reasoning whether there be a-
" ny *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges
" you to receive the *Scriptures* as the *Word*
" of God. Whereas your very Reasoning

" upon

" upon this Matter, ſhows there is no Neceſ-
" ſity or *Authority* to which you are obliged
" to ſubmit. For ſince you are allowed to
" reaſon and enquire whether this be neceſ-
" ſary, it is certain, there is an end of all Au-
" thority or Neceſſity, to oblige you to re-
" ceive the *Scriptures as the Word* of God;
" and if you do but ſincerely follow your
" own private Perſuaſions, you are intitled
" to the ſame Degrees of God's Favour, whe-
" ther you receive the Scriptures as his Word
" or not."

Now, my Lord, thus it is that you have inſtructed the World, in relation to the Authority which obliges us to *external Communion.*

The Queſtion is, Whether there be any Authority which obliges us to any *particular external Communion?*

Now, my Lord, what has any one to do in this Diſpute, but to ſhow whether Chriſt has *inſtituted* external Communion, or not? For on this alone muſt the Neceſſity of it depend. And if it appears that external Communion be inſtituted by our Saviour as a Method of Salvation, then it will follow, that we are under a *Neceſſity*, as we hope for Salvation, of being in that particular Method or Manner of external Communion, which Chriſt has inſtituted; ſo that unleſs it can be ſhown, that all *pretended* Chriſtian Communions, are as truly that *Method*, or particular Communion

which Chriſt has inſtituted, as any other Communion is; it muſt be as neceſſary to be in ſome *one particular* Communion, as it is neceſſary to obey Chriſt; and as dangerous to join in ſome other Communions, as it is dangerous to deſpiſe his Authority.

But now your Lordſhip, inſtead of conſidering what external Communion is *inſtituted*, and what *Neceſſity* ariſes from ſuch *Inſtitution*, or where we may find ſuch external Communion, amongſt the many *pretended* Chriſtian Communions, has wholly paſſed over this Point, and determined the Queſtion, by telling us, that ſince we are allowed the Uſe of our Reaſon in the Choice of Religion, it matters not what *Authority* we oppoſe, either of God or Man, and that there can be no *Neceſſity* of our being of any *particular* Communion, but where our private Judgment *ſincerely* directs us

Thus you ſay; *If the Excellency of one Communion above another may be regarded, then there is an End of all human Authority to oblige us to one particular external Communion* *. And to ſhow that you can as eaſily deſtroy all *Divine* Authority or Neceſſity of any *particular Communion*, or Religion, you tell us, that *our Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon our actual being or continuing in any* particular Method, *but upon*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 115.

our

our real Sincerity *. So that here the *Sincerity* of *private Judgment* as effectually deſtroys all *divine Authority* and *Neceſſity* of any particular Communion or Religion, as it deſtroys that which is *human*; and we are rendered as *happy* and as *high* in the *Favour* of God, for *breaking* his Laws, as if we had *obſerved* them.

For here it is proved, that there is no *Neceſſity* of any particular Communion or Religion, not becauſe there is none *inſtituted* by God, but becauſe, whether inſtituted or not, our *ſincere Perſuaſion* will equally juſtify us, whether it complies with or oppoſes ſuch Inſtitution.

But to proceed.

I ſhall now ſhow, how this Doctrine of yours of *Sincerity* expoſes all the *Terms* of Salvation as delivered in Scripture.

In the Scripture we find that *Baptiſm* is made a *Term* of Salvation; but if *Sincerity without* Baptiſm be as *certain* a *Title* to the Favour of God, as *Sincerity* with Baptiſm, then it is plain, that *not to be baptized*, is as much a *Condition* or *Term* of Salvation, as *Baptiſm* is a *Term* of Salvation. For, if Baptiſm *with* Sincerity was *more* a Term or Condition of God's Favour, than *no Baptiſm* with Sincerity, then it is certain that it is not *Sincerity alone* that procures the Favour of

* *Preſerv.* p. 90.

God: And it is as certain, that if Sincerity alone procures us the Favour of God, then *Baptiſm* is no *more* a *Term* of Salvation, than the *Refuſal of Baptiſm* is a *Term* of Salvation. So that this Doctrine makes *Baptiſm*, and the *Refuſal* of Baptiſm, either equally *Terms*, or equally *no Terms* of Salvation; equally *advantagious*, or equally *inſignificant*.

When therefore our Bleſſed Saviour ſays, that except we are *baptiſed* we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God *, and he that is not *baptized* ſhall be *damned*; according to this Doctrine of yours, we may alſo ſay juſt the contrary, that except we *refuſe* Baptiſm we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; and he that is *baptized* ſhall be *damned*.

This, my Lord, is very ſhocking; but I ſhall eaſily ſhow that theſe Aſſertions are as *proper* and as *juſt*, as the contrary Aſſertions, if your Doctrine of Sincerity be right.

For, ſince your Doctrine puts the ſincere *Acceptance*, and the ſincere *Refuſal* of Baptiſm, upon the ſame Foot as to the *Favour* of God, there can be no more Danger in ſincerely *refuſing* Baptiſm, than in ſincerely *accepting* of Baptiſm. Now if there is no more Danger in the *one* Practice than in the *other*, it muſt be plain to the moſt ordinary Underſtanding, that it is as *juſt* and *proper* to de-

* *Joh.* 3. 3.

clare

clare *one* Practice dangerous as the *other*; that is, it must be as proper to say, he that *is* baptized shall be *damned*, as to say, he that is *not* baptized shall be *damned*.

Now I know your Lordship cannot, upon these Principles, show, that it is more dangerous to *refuse* Baptism sincerely, than to *receive* Baptism sincerely; and so long as this is granted, you must allow that it is as just to fix danger upon *Baptism itself*, as upon the *want* of Baptism. And consequently, all your Reasonings upon this Subject are one continued Censure upon our Blessed Saviour's Doctrine in relation to Baptism, which according to your Notions, is only as *just* and *proper*, as the quite contrary would have been.

Again, our Saviour tells us, that *except we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, we have no Life in us* *.

Here we see, the *eating* the Flesh and *drinking* the Blood of the Son of Man is an *instituted Term* of Salvation, and insisted upon by our Saviour; but if your Doctrine be true, we may as well declare the *contrary* to be a *Term* of Salvation, and say, *except we sincerely refuse to eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, we have no Life in us.*

For, my Lord, if Sincerity in *refusing* to eat this Flesh, be the *same Title* to God's Favour that the *eating* of it with Sincerity is,

* *John* 6.

it

it is plain, there is no more Advantage *in eating*, than in *not eating*; and consequently it is as well to say, that except we *forbear* eating the Flesh of the Son of Man we have no Life in us, as to say, that except we *eat* the Flesh of the Son of Man we have no Life in us; there being plainly from this Doctrine, no more Danger in *forbearing* to eat, than in *eating*; nor any more Necessity of eating, than of forbearing to eat, since both these Practices are *equally good* and *advantagious* with *Sincerity*, and *equally* bad and insignificant without it.

And now, my Lord, let the World judge, whether you could have thought of a Doctrine more *contradictory* to the express Words of our Saviour, and all the *instituted Terms* of Salvation, than this of yours about Sincerity, which makes it no more *necessary* to *observe* the *instituted Terms* of Salvation, than to *break* them; and which also makes it as proper, to declare it as *dangerous* to *observe* such Institutions, as to *reject* them. This I have shown particularly in Baptism, where your Doctrine makes it as proper to say, he that *is baptized* shall be *damned*, as to say, that he who is *not* baptized shall be *damned*; and in the same manner does it contradict and confound the Scriptures, and make the *contrary* to every *Institution* as *much* a Means of Salvation, as the *Institution* itself.

Your

Your Lordſhip has given us a *Demonſtration*, as you call it, that your Doctrine of *Sincerity* and private *Perſuaſion* is right.

Thus you aſk: *What is it that juſtified the Proteſtants —— in ſetting up their own Biſhops? Was it, that the Popiſh Doctrines were actually corrupt, or that the Proteſtants were perſuaded in their own Conſciences, that they were ſo? The latter without doubt.* And then comes your *Demonſtration*, in this manner; *take away from them this Perſuaſion, and they are ſo far from being juſtified, that they are condemned for their Departure; give them this Perſuaſion again, they are condemned if they do not ſeparate* *.

You want to be ſhown the Fallacy in this Demonſtration, which I hope I ſhall ſhow to your Satisfaction.

It is granted, that Corruption in Religion is no *Juſtification* of thoſe who leave it, unleſs they are perſuaded of that Corruption.

It is alſo granted, that they who are fully perſuaded that a Religion is *ſinful*, are obliged to ſeparate from it, though it ſhould not be *ſinful*. But then it does by no means follow, that they who leave a *true* Religion, and they who leave a *falſe* Religion, through their particular Perſuaſions, are *equally juſti-*

* *Preſer.* p. 85. *Anſw. to Rep.* p. 103.

fied,

fied, or have an equal Title to the *ſame Degree* of God's Favour.

Here lies the *great Fallacy* in this Argument, that you uſe the ſame Word (*viz. juſtified*) in relation to both theſe People in the very *ſame Senſe*; whereas if they are *juſtified* (if this Word muſt be uſed) it is in a very different *Senſe* and different *Meaſure*, and they are not entitled to the *ſame Degree* of God's Favour. Now, a Fallacy in this Point deſtroys the whole Demonſtration, for the Queſtion wholly turns upon *this Point*, Whether they who are ſincere in a *true* Religion, and they who are ſincere in a *falſe* Religion, are *equally* juſtified and entitled to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour?

This very Thing was objected to you by the learned *Committee*, who ſaid, *that an erroneous Conſcience was never, till now, allowed* wholly *to juſtify Men in their Errors* *.

To which you have no better Anſwer to make than this, *That it muſt either juſtify them, or not juſtify them. It muſt either* wholly *juſtify them, or not juſtify them* at all †.

My Lord, I ſuppoſe a Man is juſtified by his living *ſoberly*, *righteouſly*, and *godlily* in this preſent World. I aſk therefore, Does his

* *Rep.* p. 7. † *Anſw. to Repr.* p 95.

living

living *ſoberly* juſtify him wholly, or does it not juſtify him *at all?* If it juſtifies him *wholly*, then there is no occaſion of his living *righteouſly* and *godlily*; if it does not juſtify him *at all*, then there is no need of his living *ſoberly*.

Your Anſwer to the *Committee* has juſt as much *Senſe* or *Divinity* in it, as there is in this Argument.

Here I muſt deſire, that it may be obſerved, that the Queſtion is not, Whether *Sincerity* in *any* Religion, does not recommend us to the Favour of God? But whether we are entitled to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour, whether we are ſincere in a *true* or *falſe* way of Worſhip?

I ſhall therefore farther conſider this Point.

Firſt; If *true* and *right* Religion hath any thing in its own Nature to recommend us to God, then Sincerity in this *true* and *right* Religion muſt recommend us *more* to God, than Sincerity in a *falſe* and *wrong* Religion; becauſe we have a Recommendation from our *Religion*, as well as from our *Sincerity* in it. For inſtance, if it be in *any Degree* in the World more acceptable to God, that we ſhould follow *Chriſt*, than *Mahomet*, our Sincerity in following *Chriſt*, muſt recommend us to juſt *ſo much* more of God's Favour, than our Sincerity in following *Mahomet*; as it is more acceptable to him that we

we ſhould follow one than the other. Now to ſay that *true* and *right* Religion, has nothing in its own Nature to recommend us to God, is ſaying, that things *true* and *right* are no more acceptable to God, than things *falſe* and *wrong*; but as it would be Blaſphemy to ſay this, ſo it is very little leſs, to ſay, that Sincerity in a *falſe* and *wrong* Religion, is juſt the *ſame Juſtification* or *Recommendation* to the Favour of God, that Sincerity in the *true* and *right* Religion is.

Farther; The whole *End* and *Deſign* of Religion, is to *recommend* us to the Favour of God. If therefore we can ſuppoſe a Religion *inſtituted* by God, which does no more, as ſuch, recommend us to the Favour of God, than a Religion *invented* by *Men* or *Devils*, as *ſuch*, recommends us to the Favour of God; then we muſt alſo ſuppoſe, that God has inſtituted a Religion, which does not *at all* anſwer the general *End* and *Deſign* of Religion, *viz.* the *recommending* us to the Favour of God.

Unleſs therefore we will prophanely declare, that God has inſtituted a Religion, which, *as ſuch*, does us no Service, nor any better promotes the general *End* of Religion, than any corrupt *Inventions* of Men, we muſt affirm, that Sincerity in his Religion will entitle us to greater Degrees of his Favour, than Sincerity in a Religion not from Him.

Secondly;

Secondly; If there be any *real Excellency* or *Goodneſs* in one Religion, which is not in another, then it is certain, that *Sincerity* does not *equally* juſtify us in any Religion; and on the contrary, it is as certain, that if Sincerity in *any* Religion does entitle us to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour, then there is no ſuch thing as any real *Excellency* or *Goodneſs* in one Religion, which is not in another.

When you are charged with deſtroying all Difference between Religions. by this Account of Sincerity, you retreat to an Anſwer as weak as could poſſibly have been thought of. Thus you ſay; *What I ſaid about* private Perſuaſion, *relates to the* Juſtification *of the Man before God, and not to the* Excellency *of one Communion above another, which it leaves juſt as it found it* *.

Here, my Lord, you ſuppoſe that one Religion may very much exceed another Religion in *Goodneſs* and *Excellency*, and yet that this *Goodneſs* and *Excellency* has nothing to do with the *Juſtification* of Perſons; for you ſay, you was not ſpeaking of the *Excellency* of one Communion above another, but of what relates to the *Juſtification* of a Man, *&c.* which plainly ſhows, that you do not allow the *Excellency* of Religion to have any thing to do with the Juſtification of Men; for if

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 113.

you

you did, it must have been necessary to speak of the *Excellency* of one Religion above another, when you was speaking of what it is which *justifies* a Man before God.

Now, my Lord, to grant that there is an *Excellency* and *Goodness* in some Religion, and yet exclude this *excellent* and *good* Religion, from having any more in it to *justify* and *recommend* us to the Favour of God, than what is to be found in any other Religion less excellent; is just as *good Sense*, as to allow, that some Food is *much more* excellent and proper than other Food; and yet exclude this *most excellent proper* Food, from having any thing in it to preserve *Health* and *Strength*, more than in *any other* Food.

For the *Goodness* and *Excellency* of Religion, is as *truly* a *relative* Goodness and Excellency, as the Goodness and Excellency of Food is a *relative* Goodness and Excellency. And as that Food can only be said to be *better* than another Food, because it has a *better* Effect upon the Body than any other Food; so that Religion can only be said to be *better* than another, because it raises us higher in the Favour of God than any other Religion.

It is therefore most certain, that if any one Religion can be said to be *better* than another, it must be, because one Religion may be of more Advantage to us than another.

For

For as Religion in general is *good*, becauſe it does us *good*, and brings us into Favour with God; ſo the *particular Excellency* and *Goodneſs* of any Religion, muſt conſiſt in this, that it does us a *more particular Good*, and raiſes us to *higher* Degrees of God's Favour, than a *leſs excellent* Religion would have done.

So that when your Lordſhip talks of the *Excellency* of one Religion above another, as having nothing in it, *as ſuch*, to recommend us to higher Degrees of God's Favour, or effect our *Juſtification*; it is full as abſurd, as to ſay, that though one kind of *Learning* may be more *excellent* than another kind of *Learning*, yet no Men are more *excellent* or *valuable*, for having one kind of *Learning* rather than another.

For as no kind of Learning can be ſaid to be *peculiarly* excellent, but becauſe it gives ſome *peculiar Excellency* to thoſe who are Maſters of it; ſo no kind of Religion can be ſaid to be *more excellent* than another, unleſs thoſe who profeſs it, reap ſome *Advantage* from it, which is not to be had from a Religion *leſs excellent*.

From all this it appears, firſt, that there can be no ſuch thing as any *Goodneſs* or *Excellency* in one Religion above another, but as it procures a *peculiar Good* and *Advantage* to thoſe who profeſs it.

Secondly; That your Lordſhip can allow no other *Goodneſs* or *Excellency* in Religion, even from your own expreſs Words, but what implies as great an Abſurdity, as to allow of good *Food*, good *Learning*, or good *Advice*, which can do no body any good *at all*.

For ſince you expreſsly exclude the *Goodneſs* or *Excellency* of any Religion, from having any part in recommending us to the Favour of God, and will only allow it to carry us ſo far, as Sincerity in a *worſe* Religion will carry us; it is certain, that this *good* and *excellent* Religion, is juſt as good as *that*, which does us no good *at all*.

So that whether you will yet own that you have deſtroyed all the difference betwixt Religions, or not, I cannot tell; yet I imagine, every one will ſee that you have only left ſuch a *Goodneſs* in one Religion above another, as can do no body any good *at all*.

The ſhort is this; If you will own there is no *Excellency* in one Religion above another, then you are guilty of making *Chriſtianity* no better than *Mahometaniſm*; but if you will acknowledge a *Goodneſs* and *Excellency* in one Religion above another, and yet contend that it is *Sincerity alone*, which does us *any Good*, or recommends us to the Favour of God, in all Religions alike, this is as abſurd, as to ſay, ſuch a thing is *much better* for us than any other thing, and yet aſſert, that *any other* thing will do us *as much good* as that.

I have,

I have, I hope, sufficiently confuted *your* Doctrine of Sincerity, from the Nature of Religion. I shall now, in a word or two, examine it farther, by considering the Nature of *Private Persuasion*, which can do all these mighty things.

And, first, I deny that *Persuasion* was the *only* thing which justified the Protestants, or which recommends People to the Favour of God in the Choice of a Religion; and that, because if their *private Persuasion* was founded in *Pride*, *Prejudice*, *worldly Interest*, or *any thing*, but the *real Truth*, and the *Justice* of the Cause, that their *private Persuasion* did not *justify* them before God; nor had they, upon this Supposition, so good a Title to his Favour, as those who did not reform.

If you say, that Persons cannot be *sincere* in their Persuasions, who are influenced by *Pride*, or *Prejudice*, or any *false* Motive: To this I answer;

First; That according to your *own Principles*, that Man is to be esteemed *sincere*, who *thinks* himself to be *sincere*. For, as it is a first *Principle* with you, that a Man is *justified* in point of Religion, not because he observes what in its own Nature is *true* and *right* Religion, but because he observes that which he *thinks* to be *true* and *right* Religion; so according to *this Principle*, a Man is to be accounted *sincere*, not because

he acts up to *true* and *juſt* Principles of *Sincerity*, but becauſe he *thinks* in his own Mind, that he does act up to ſuch *juſt* and *true* Principles of Sincerity. So that, my Lord, Sincerity it ſeems is as truly a *private Perſuaſion*, as Religion is a *private* Perſuaſion; and therefore any one may as eaſily think himſelf *truly* ſincere, and yet not have true Sincerity, as he may think himſelf in the *true* Religion, and yet not be in the true Religion.

Unleſs therefore you will maintain, that a Perſon who is miſtaken in his *Sincerity*, and miſtaken in his *Religion* too, who hath neither *true* Religion, or true *Sincerity*, hath as good a Title to the Favour of God as he who is *truly* ſincere, and in a *true* Religion, you muſt give up this *Cauſe* of Sincerity. For it is *demonſtrable* from your *own Principles*, that any one may as often happen to be miſtaken in his Sincerity, and take that for *Sincerity* which is not Sincerity, as he may be miſtaken in his *Religion*, and take that for *Religion* which is not *Religion*.

And conſequently it is as reaſonable to talk of *ſincere* Perſons who are influenced by *wrong Motives*, as to talk of Perſons being *juſtified* in Religion, who live in a *falſe* Religion.

So that, my Lord, this is the Reſult of your Doctrine, that Perſons neither *truly* ſincere, nor in the *true* Religion, are yet entitled

tled to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour, with thoſe who are *truly* ſincere in the *true* Religion.

The ſhort is this, according to a Maxim of your own, you are obliged to acknowledge that Man to be *ſincere*, who *thinks* himſelf to be *ſincere*; becauſe you ſay a Man is to be eſteemed Religious, not becauſe he practiſes *true* Religion, but becauſe he *thinks* he practiſes *true* Religion; therefore you muſt ſay, that a Man is ſincere, not becauſe he is *truly* ſincere, but becauſe he *thinks* himſelf to be *ſincere*.

It is alſo as *poſſible* and as *likely* for a Man to be miſtaken in thoſe things which conſtitute *true* Sincerity, as in thoſe things which conſtitute *true* Religion.

And therefore if *this* Sincerity be the *only* and the *ſame* Title to God's Favour in any Religion, it follows, that Sincerity, though influenced by *falſe* Motives, and in a falſe way of Worſhip, is as acceptable to God, as a *ſincere* Perſuaſion governed by *right* Motives, in a *true* and *inſtituted* way of Worſhip.

So that all the fine things which you have ſaid of Sincerity, as implying in it all which is *rational* and *excellent*, are come to nothing; and you are as ſtrictly obliged to allow that Man to be *ſincere*, who miſtakes the *Grounds* and *Principles* of *true* Sincerity, becauſe he *thinks* himſelf to be ſincere, as to allow that Perſon to be juſtified in his Reli-

gion, who miſtakes the true Religion, becauſe he thinks himſelf in the true Religion.

So that it is not *Sincerity*, as it contains all that is *rational* and *excellent* which alone juſtifies, but as it may be an *idle*, *vain*, *whimſical* Perſuaſion, in which People think themſelves in the right. This Perſuaſion, though founded in the Follies, Paſſions, and Prejudices of human Nature, conſecrates every Way of Worſhip, and makes the Man thus perſuaded as acceptable to God, as he who through a right uſe of his Reaſon, ſerves God in that Method which he has *inſtituted*.

I ſhall end this Point with only this Obſervation, that however hearty a Friend you may be to the Chriſtian Religion your ſelf, this I dare ſay, that the heartieſt *Enemy* it has, will thank you for thus *defending* it. And they who wiſh all the Diſtinctions betwixt Religions confounded, and maintain that we have nothing to hope or fear but from our *own Perſuaſions*, are the only Perſons who can call you their *proper Defender*.

Of the Reformation.

I Proceed now, in a Word or two, to ſhow, that the *Neceſſity* of Communion with any *particular* Church, and the *Effects* of Excommunication, are perfectly conſiſtent with the Principles of the *Reformation*.

You ſay, *If there be a Church Authority to oblige People to external Communion,—— I beg to know, How* can the *Reformation itſelf be juſtified?——For there was then an Order of Church-men, veſted with all ſpiritual Authority;——there was therefore a Church Authority to oblige Chriſtians, a Power of ſome over others. What was it therefore to which we owe this very Church of* England *?

To this it may be anſwered,

Firſt; That this Argument proceeds upon a falſe Suppoſition, namely, that it is the *Laws* of *any Men*, which obliges us to *external Communion*. Which I have already ſhown to be as falſe, as to ſuppoſe that it is the *Laws* of *any* Men which obliges us to be *Chriſtians*.

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 118.

Secondly; That there may be a *real* and a *great* Authority which obliges us to *external Communion*, though this Authority be not founded in any *human Laws*; for there is as real and apparent an Authority for *Baptiſm* and the *Supper* of the Lord, and other Parts of external Communion, as if they were the expreſs Matter of any human Laws.

Thirdly; That the Laws of Men in this Affair of Religion, are of the ſame Obligation and Force that they are in other Matters. If they command Things indifferent, they are to be obeyed for the Authority of the Command; if they enjoin Things in their own Nature good, the Neceſſity of Obedience is greater; but if they command Things unlawful, we are not to comply, but obey God rather than Man.

Fourthly; The Queſtion therefore at the *Reformation* was not, Whether the *Laws* of the *Pope* or the *Prince* were on the ſide of the Church of *Rome?* But whether that *Faith* and thoſe *Inſtitutions* which conſtitute the Chriſtian Religion, were with the *Reformers*, or with the *Papiſts*. For the Church Authority which obliged *them then*, and which obliges now to external Communion, was not an Authority which obliged them to comply with any *number* of Biſhops, or any *State Laws*, but to enter into Communion with that Biſhop or Biſhops, who obſerved that way of Worſhip which Chriſt had inſtituted. The

Neceſ-

Neceſſity of being in external Communion, does not oblige us to be in Communion with the *Pope* or any *Number* of Biſhops *as ſuch*, whoſe Authority we may happen to be born under; but it obliges us to be in that Communion, which is that *Way* or *Method* of Salvation which Chriſt has *inſtituted*.

So that though we ſhould grant, that at the *Reformation* we broke through the *human* Laws of the *Church*, which required us to continue in Communion with the Church of *Rome*, it will by no means follow, that we broke through *that Authority* which obliges us to external Communion, becauſe *that Authority* is not founded in any *human Laws*, but is the Authority of Chriſt, requiring us to obſerve all thoſe things which conſtitute *external Communion*. For as it is the Authority of Chriſt which obliges us to be *Chriſtians*, ſo that ſame Authority obliges us to enter into that Communion, where the *Inſtitutions* and Faith of Chriſt are preſerved.

When therefore you ſay, *if Church* Authority (meaning human Laws) *be a ſufficient Obligation upon them* to determine them, then *our Forefathers ought not in Conſcience to have ſeparated from the Church of* Rome *:

This, my Lord, is no more to the Purpoſe, than if you had ſaid, if the King of *France* has a Right to be obeyed all over *Europe*,

* P. 118.

then

then all over *Europe* they ought in Conſcience to obey him.

For ſince it is neither pretended, nor allowed, that *human Laws* are a *ſufficient Obligation* to external Communion, to argue from this Suppoſition is as foreign to the Purpoſe, as to ſuppoſe that the King of *France* was Governour of all *Europe*.

The next Step you take is alſo very extraordinary, where having rejected *human* Authority from being a *ſufficient Obligation* to external Communion, you thus proceed, *But if Men are their own Judges by the Laws of God and of Chriſt in this Matter; if they have a Right to uſe their Judgment, and be determined by it*;——then here is a *Juſtification* of the *Reformation, and particularly of the Proteſtant Church of* England *.

The moſt *complaiſant* Juſtification, my Lord, that could poſſibly have been thought of, becauſe it as *peculiarly* juſtifies all the Enemies of the Church of *England*, of what kind ſoever, as it juſtifies the Proteſtant Church of *England*.

For your Argument proceeds thus; if there be no *human Authority* to which we are abſolutely obliged to ſubmit, but have a Right to uſe our own Judgments, then the *Reformation* is juſtified. Here we ſee the Doctrines of the reformed Church are not taken into the

* P. 181.

Queſtion;

Queſtion; ſhe is not ſaid to be juſtified, as being a *true* Church, or as preſerving thoſe *Orders* and *Inſtitutions*, which conſtitute the true Church; but is juſtified, becauſe Men may uſe their Reaſon, and not enter into any Communion which *human Laws* have happened to eſtabliſh. Now if we of the Church of *England* are juſtified in the Choice of our Religion, becauſe no *human Laws* have an abſolute Power to oblige us to be of any particular Religion, then all People, whether *Papiſts* or *Proteſtants*, whether *Quakers*, *Ranters*, *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Infidels*, are *equally* juſtified in the Choice of their *particular Ways* of Worſhip, becauſe *human Laws* have not an abſolute Power to oblige them to be of any particular Religion. So that though you call this a *Juſtification* of the Proteſtant Church of *England*, you might as juſtly have called it a *Juſtification* of *Quakers*, *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Infidels*: For it is as truly a Juſtification of *every one* of them, as it is a Juſtification of the Church of *England*.

But to proceed.

How comes it, my Lord, that the *Reformation* is *juſtified*, becauſe People may uſe their Reaſon, and are not under a Neceſſity from human Laws of being of this or that Church? Why muſt the *Reformation* be *right and juſt*, becauſe *human Laws* are not ſufficient to hinder a *Reformation*. Is there no *other Authority* that can make any particular Reli-

Religion neceſſary, becauſe *human* Authority cannot? May it not be our *Duty* to be of *this* Communion, and a *Sin* to enter into *another* Communion, though *human* Laws as ſuch cannot make the one a *Duty*, or the other a *Sin*? Does *Baptiſm*, the *Supper* of the Lord, and a *Belief* in *Jeſus Chriſt*, ceaſe to be neceſſary, becauſe that Neceſſity does not ariſe from *human Laws*?

Now if Things may be *neceſſary* to Salvation, though they are not made ſo by *human* Authority, then it is no Juſtification of the *Reformation* to ſay, that the *Reformers* might uſe their Reaſon, and not chuſe that Religion which *human* Laws commanded them to chuſe; this will be no Juſtification, till it appears, that they choſe that Religion which the *Authority* of God required them to chuſe.

For it would be Nonſenſe to ſay, People are juſtified for having ſuch a ſort of *Baptiſm*, becauſe the *Neceſſity* of Baptiſm does not ariſe from *human Laws*. Yet this is as *good Senſe*, as to ſay, ſuch a People are juſtified in their Religion, becauſe no Religion is made neceſſary by *human* Laws. For as they are only juſtified in Point of *Baptiſm*, who obſerve ſuch Baptiſm, as the *Authority* of God has *appointed*, ſo are they only juſtified in their *Religion*, who enter into that *Religion* which the *Authority* of God has *inſtituted*.

But your Lordſhip has no ſooner ſhown that *human* Authority, *as ſuch*, cannot oblige us

to

to be of any *particular Religion*, but you presently congratulate your Readers upon an entire Freedom from all Authority in Religion, and without once mentioning that the Reformation is right and just, because of the *Orders*, *Doctrines* or *Institutions*, which it maintains; you say it is justified for *such a Reason*, as justifies in an *equal* Degree every Religion, and every Change of Religion in the World. You have so far justified it, as to show that it is as well to be of it, as of any other Church; and as well to be of any other Church, as of it.

Who would not think, my Lord, that the *instituted Terms* of Salvation had something to do with the Justification of Christians? Yet you can justify People without any regard to them. Who would not think that a Religion is unjustifiable, if it is contrary to the Religion *instituted* by Christ? Yet your Lordship has justified *all Changes* in Religion, without any regard to the *Institutions* of Christ, solely for this Reason, because Men may use their own Judgment, and not submit to the Laws of Men, *as such*, in the Choice of Religion. As if, because they are not to be altogether governed by the Commands of *Men* in the Choice of a Religion, neither are they to be determined by the Authority of God, or any more tied down to *his Institutions*, than to *human* Laws. Who would think

think that no *Change* in Religion is *dangerous*, becauſe Religion is only inſtituted by God, and has his Authority to make it neceſſary? Yet your Lordſhip baniſhes all Danger from *every Change* of Religion, and pronounces the *ſame Safety* in every Opinion, becauſe People are under no abſolute human Authority.

It is very ſurprizing, after all this, to ſee your Lordſhip breaking out into *paſſionate* Expreſſions for the *Cauſe* of the *Reformation*, and ſo often *declaring*, that it is for the ſake of the Reformation that you have taken ſo much Pains, and with ſo much Pleaſure, in your *late Writings*.

Now it ſeems, your Adverſaries have undermined the very Foundations of the reformed Church of *England*; and that in this Manner.

Firſt; They juſtify the Church of *England*, by ſhowing that it maintains all thoſe *Orders*, *Inſtitutions*, and *Doctrines*, which Chriſt has made neceſſary to Salvation; that it is a *true* Church, becauſe it conſiſts of all thoſe Things, which by the *Inſtitution* of Chriſt conſtitute a *true* Church.

For this, your Lordſhip rebukes them as Enemies to the *Reformation*, as Friends to *Popery*; and declares, that the Proteſtants are not juſtified becauſe they have choſen a *true* and *right* Religion, but becauſe they *think*

think they have chosen a true and right Religion.

Again, your Adversaries insist upon the *Necessity* of entering into Communion with the Church of *England*, because it is a true Church of Christ; and declare those guilty of the heinous Sin of *Schism*, who separate from her Communion.

Here again you condemn them, as conspiring the Ruin of the *Reformation*, because if the *Dissenters* are not justified in their Separation from the Church of *England* by their *private Persuasion*, neither is the Church of *England* to be justified for its Separation from *Rome*. So that the Difference between your Lordship and your Adversaries, in relation to the Reformed Church of *England* is this.

They support and recommend this Church, because it contains all the *necessary* Doctrines and Institutions of Christ, and consequently give it an Advantage over every other *way* of *Worship*, which is either *corrupted* or *defective*, in these Doctrines and Institutions of Christ.

But you *support* and *recommend* it (pardon the Expressions) not from any thing which relates to it at all, but from *private Persuasion*; and consequently allow every Religion in the World to be as *just*, and *good*, and *safe*, if Men are but *so persuaded*.

They

They defend the Church of *England*, by ſhowing what it is, and by aſſerting the Truth of its Doctrines.

You have no Title to be mentioned amongſt its *Defenders*, but as you may be called a *Defender* of *Quakers* and *Fanatics*, *Jews* and *Turks*, and every Religion in the World, which any one *thinks* to be *right*.

To proceed; As a farther *Defence* of the Reformation, you aſk, *How did the firſt Reformers behave themſelves? Did they not think and ſpeak of them (viz.* Abſolution and Excommunication) *as having nothing to do with the Favour of God, as human Engines, and mere Outcries of human* Terror? *And did they mean by this to claim to themſelves the Right of Abſolution, which they had denied to others, becauſe they were fallible and weak Men; or to aſſert a Power of Excommunication, ſo as to affect Men's eternal Salvation, to themſelves in one Church, which they had diſregarded and trampled upon in another?* No: They treated all Excommunications as alike, and upon an equal foot; *and could upon no other Account neglect and diſregard them as they did, but becauſe God had not given to any Man the Diſpoſal of his Mercy or Anger* *.

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 121, 122.

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The Argument, my Lord, here proceeds thus: Firſt; That all Abſolutions and Excommunications muſt have been eſteemed alike, and equally *inſignificant* by our Reformers, becauſe they were not terrified at the Excommunications of the Church of *Rome*, nor thought an Abſolution from that Church neceſſary.

Secondly; That the Reformers having thus diſregarded *theſe Powers* in that Church, ought not to pretend, that the ſame Powers have any more Effect when they exerciſe them in this Church.

To this it may be anſwered, that if we ought not to pretend to *any Effects* in *Abſolution* or *Excommunication*, becauſe we diſregarded *thoſe Powers* as exerciſed by the Church of *Rome*; that then we ought not to pretend the Neceſſity of *any Faith*, becauſe we diſregarded the Faith of the *Romiſh* Church; nor the Neceſſity of any *Sacraments*, nor the Neceſſity of the *Canonical Writings*, becauſe we diſregarded the Canonical Books of the Church of *Rome*. And it is as good Senſe to cry out here, "Did they not treat their "*Sacraments* as mere *Inventions* of Men? "Did they mean by this to claim to themſelves a Power to make Sacraments *neceſſary* in *one Church*, which Power they had "trampled upon in *another*? Did they deny the Neceſſity of *ſeven* Sacraments "*there*, in order to aſſert the Neceſſity of "*two* Sacraments *here*? No: They treated

" *all* Sacraments as *alike*, and upon an *equal* " *foot* with reſpect to God's Favour, and " could upon no other Account neglect and " diſregard them as they did, but becauſe " God's Favour or Diſpleaſure was no ways " affected *by any Sacraments*.

Here let common Senſe judge, whether this Argument of yours, ſhowing the Unreaſonableneſs of pretending to any Significancy in *Excommunication*, becauſe we diſregarded the Excommunication of the Church of *Rome*, does not prove it as unreaſonable to inſiſt upon the *Neceſsity* of *any Faith*, or any *Sacraments*, or any *Canonical Books*, becauſe we denied the Romiſh *Creed*, the Romiſh *Sacraments*, and *Canon* of Scripture?

For our Reformers no more intended to ſhow that Excommunication was a *Dream* and *Trifle*, becauſe they diſregarded the Excommunication of the Church of *Rome*, than they intended to ſhow that all *Sacraments*, all *Faith*, and all *Scripture*, were *Dreams* and *Trifles*, by their not owning either the *Sacraments*, or the *Creed*, or the *Canon* of the Church of *Rome*. And, my Lord, what a worthy Defender of *Chriſtianity* and the *Reformation* would he be, who ſhould aſk us what we mean by the Neceſſity of *Sacraments*, or *Faith*, or *Scripture*, ſince we have not allowed the Neceſſity either of the Romiſh *Sacraments*, *Faith*, or *Scripture*? Yet ſuch a *Defender* is your Lordſhip, who

contends

contends that we ought to reject Excommunication as a *Trifle* and *Dream*, becauſe we diſregarded the Excommunication of the Church of *Rome*.

I have now gone as far in the Examination of your *Doctrines*, as my preſent Deſign will allow me, and am apt to think that in this and my *former Letters*, I have gone ſo far, as to ſhow, that a few more *ſuch Defences* of *Chriſtianity* and the *Reformation*, as you have given us, would compleat their Ruin, as far as *human Writings* can compleat it.

And had you meant ever ſo much harm to *Chriſtianity* and the *Reformation*, I believe no one who wiſhes their Confuſion, would have thought you could have taken a better way to obtain that End, than by writing as you have lately written.

For he muſt be a very Bitter *Enemy* to them both, who would not think it ſufficient to ſet *Chriſtianity* and *Mahometaniſm*, the *Reformation* and *Quakeriſm*, upon the *ſame* foot.

And he muſt be very ſlow of Apprehenſion, who does not ſee that to be plainly done, by reſolving all into *private Perſuaſion*, and making *Sincerity* in *every* Religion, whether *true* or *falſe*, the *ſame Title* to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour.

I ſhall not with your Lordſhip make any Declarations about *my own Sincerity*; I am content to leave that to God, and to let all the World paſs what Judgment they pleaſe about it.

I am Your Lordſhip's

Moſt Humble Servant,

WILLIAM LAW.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE Learned *Committee* obſerved to your Lordſhip, that *an erroneous Conſcience was never, till now, allowed wholly to juſtify Men in their Errors.*

This Obſervation I have ſhown to be *true* and *juſt*, as it implies, that though Sincerity in an *erroneous way* of Worſhip ſhould in *ſome degree* or other recommend Men to the Favour or Mercy of God, yet it is not that *entire Recommendation* to his Favour, which is effected by our ſincere Obedience in the *true way* of Salvation: That is, though it ſhould juſtify them in *ſome degree*, yet it cannot juſtify them in *that degree*, in which they are juſtified, who ſincerely ſerve God, in that true Religion which he himſelf has inſtituted.

Now our Juſtification, as it is effected by the Merits of Chriſt, is in *one and the ſame degree*; but as our Juſtification is effected by our own Behaviour, it is as capable of *different degrees*, as our Virtue and Holineſs is capable of *different* degrees; and it is alſo neceſſary that our Juſtification be *more* or *leſs*, according as our Holineſs is *more* or *leſs*.

Yet

Yet in anſwer to this Obſervation of the Learned *Committee*, you ſay, *it muſt either* juſtify *them*, *or* not juſtify *them*; *it muſt either juſtify them* wholly, *or not juſtify them* at all. This, my Lord, is as contrary to the Scripture, as it is to the Obſervation of the *Committee*. For our bleſſed Saviour, ſpeaking of the *Publican*, ſays, *I tell you, this Man went down to his Houſe* juſtified, rather *than the other* *.

Here, my Lord, is as plain a Declaration of *Degrees* in Juſtification, as can well be made, ſo far as Juſtification can be effected by our own Behaviour.

For, it is plain, the *Publican* was not *wholly* juſtified, becauſe then there would be no need of his embracing Chriſtianity; it is alſo plain, that he was juſtified *in part*, or elſe he could not be ſaid to be juſtified *rather* than the *Phariſee*.

If therefore your Anſwer confutes the Obſervation of the Learned *Committee*, it muſt alſo confute this Paſſage of *Scripture*.

I ſhall only add one word in relation to another Point.

I have already ſhown the Falſeneſs and evil Tendency of your Argument againſt *Excommunication*, which you aſſerted to be a *Dream* and *Trifle* without *any Effect*, becauſe it is our *own Behaviour alone* which can ſig-

* *Luke* 18. 10, &c.

nify

nify any thing to us with regard to the Favour of God. Now, my Lord, this *Philoſophy* ſtrikes at the very Vitals of the Chriſtian Religion: For, if this Sentence can have no Effect, if it is a *Dream* and *Trifle*, becauſe it is *our Behaviour alone* on which the Favour of God depends; then how ſhall we account for theſe Paſſages of Scripture, which attribute our *Juſtification* to the *Merits* and *Death* of Chriſt? As thus;

Jeſus Chriſt, who gave himſelf for our Sins *;

In whom we have Redemption through his Blood †;

Being juſtified by his Blood, we ſhall be ſaved from Wrath ‡.

It is the conſtant, uniform Doctrine of Scripture, that our Reconciliation and Peace with God, our Juſtification and Sanctification before God, is owing to the *Merits and Death of Chriſt*. But if what you have ſaid be true, that it is our *Behaviour alone*, which procures the Favour of God, then the *Blood* of Chriſt muſt be as truly without any Effect, as Excommunication is without any Effect.

For if the Favour of God depends entirely upon our *Behaviour alone*, then it can depend upon nothing elſe; and if it depend upon nothing elſe, then every thing elſe is equally trifling and without any Effect as to

* *Gal.* 1. 3. † *Epheſ.* 1. 7. ‡ *Rom.* 5. 9.

that

that Purpoſe; and conſequently every Paſſage in Scripture which aſcribes our *Acceptance with God* to the *Merits and Blood of Chriſt*, is as much condemned by your Doctrine, as the *Effects* of Excommunication are condemned by it.

Whether your Lordſhip did not perceive the *Inconſiſtency* of this Doctrine, with that *Satisfaction* and *Redemption* which the Scriptures teach; or whether you *knowingly* intended to oppoſe this Doctrine, is, what I ſhall leave to every one's own Judgment. Thus much I ſhall only ſay, that as you have here directly contradicted this firſt Principle of the Chriſtian Religion, if it is not what you intended, I hope you will, for the ſake of Chriſtianity, venture to declare, that though you have aſſerted, that it is our *Behaviour alone*, yet it is not *our Behaviour alone*, but more particularly the *Merits* and *Death* of Chriſt, which recommends us to the Favour of God.

F I N I S.

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